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THE THEORY OF THE ARTS.

THE

THEORY OF THE ARTS;

OR,

ART IN RELATION TO NATURE, CIVILIZATION, AND MAN.

COMPRISING

An Investigation, Analytical and Critical,

INTO THE

ORIGIN, RISE, PROVINCE, PRINCIPLES, AND APPLICATION OF EACH OF THE ARTS.

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BY

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"Omnes artes, quæ ad humanitatem pertinent, habent quoddam commune vinculum, et quasi cognatione inter se continentur."—*Cicero, Orat. pro Arch. Poet.*

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THE THEORY OF THE ARTS.

CHAPTER IX.

COMPOSITION IN ART.

I. THE principles of delineation which were laid down in one of the preceding chapters,* are generally applicable also to the regulation of artistical composition. For the purposes of the present disquisition at least, we may regard composition as but the plural of delineation. While delineation regulates the representation with propriety and effect of single figures, and of the different parts and proportions of each; composition regulates the representation in a piece, with due effect and propriety, of the various separate figures and groups of figures of which it is constituted; and the different branches of it in relation to the whole. The principles of composition, analogous to those of delineation, are, however, wholly independent of the tasteful qualities of the work, and of the infusion into and application to it of the principles of the picturesque.

The principles of the picturesque are nevertheless equally as applicable to efforts in composition, as they are to those in delineation; they serve to give effect alike to the tasteful and poetical representation of individual forms and figures, and the tasteful and poetical composition of them when united into groups and collections.

It must, however, be remarked that as a number of men

* *Vide ante*, Chap. VII.

collected together into one body, will be often disposed to think and act very differently to what each person by himself would be led to do; so, in an analogous manner, the principles of art applicable to the composition of figures in groups, vary from those which would be applied to the design of single figures by themselves. In either case the nature of the principles which regulate the movements is not changed, but the application of them is rendered different, from the alteration of circumstances.

As the principles of delineation have all alike their foundation in nature, so nature is the best, and, indeed, the only sure guide in the application and regulation of the principles of composition. Here, indeed, she instructs not by precept but by example. In the scenes which she presents, whether of men or of animals grouped in the busy world, or of landscape views, the composition will generally be found to be arranged not only according to the most perfect principles of art, but so as to afford to art the surest foundation on which to construct principles applicable for this purpose. In the ordering and disposition of a scene, whether the composition be epic or only pastoral, whether historical or merely landscape, and whether in painting, sculpture, poetry, or whatever other art, with due taste, and truly according to the principles of design, the difference is exhibited between the genius of an artist, and the mere skill of an artisan.

As will be seen by the illustrations referred to at the end of this chapter, the principles of composition are generally applicable to art of every kind, and the same principles are moreover applicable to each art.

II. The necessity of perspicuity and clearness as regards the principles of delineation, has already been shown in a previous chapter, and the value of the observance of this rule fully pointed out. What perspicuity and clearness are to delineation, arrangement and order are to composition; and, indeed, the two former constitute a necessary, and the only sure foundation for the latter. Perspicuity is, therefore, essential here, as well as in delineation, although it is applicable rather to the individual portions or figures in it than to the whole composition,

to which latter the principles of arrangement and order appear more peculiarly appropriate. Indeed, as in composition, from its almost necessary perplexity to some extent, there is greater danger of confusion than there is in simple delineation, so the principle here inculcated is even more essential than is perspicuity in delineation.

As in composition generally, so especially with regard to the principle now under consideration, nature affords at once the best example of the value, and the most complete illustration of the operation of the rule. And, indeed, the arrangement and order which nature exhibits in her various compositions, is another characteristic of her style, and is one which art cannot too closely imitate.

In some artistical compositions of each kind, the figures and images and metaphors, which are in themselves clear and striking, are so confused and jumbled together that the mind is considerably perplexed and bewildered by the description.

The arrangement and order observed in a composition in art should, however, be, not only perfect in themselves, but in strict accordance with nature. As seen in her they should neither be too uniformly regular on the one hand, nor present too great a series of strong contrasts on the other. Both these errors are alike extensive, not only from the displeasing effect which they produce, but more especially from their contrariety to nature.

On the other hand, while due order and perspicuity should ever be preserved in the arrangement of a composition, this should be the order and perspicuity of nature, and such as we see there observed, and not the formal order of a regiment of soldiers, of cattle at a fair, or of goods arranged for sale. Some artists nevertheless seem to regulate their compositions by principles analogous to those which direct the order of the latter. In poetry and in eloquence, the due arrangement of the subject with perspicuity and clearness is of the first importance, both as regards the ideas excited, and the metaphors introduced.

The above rule has, however, been to a certain extent departed from in some celebrated compositions, where confusion and disorder are expressly intended to be represented, as in

pictures and musical pieces describing battles and storms. The topic must be deemed to apologize for the mode of treating it. But the principles of composition should still be regarded even here, however much the nature of the composition may vary from ordinary subjects.

The perfection of composition in the representation of scenes of disorder and confusion, is indeed to describe the event in such a manner that the ideas suitable may be conveyed to the mind in the most forcible way, while at the same time the design and composition are, as a whole, kept under the most complete control. The very confusion thus attains its aim, and the very disorder produces the desired effect. If, on the other hand, the representation is clouded in obscurity, the result intended altogether fails. At the same time, although design exists, the appearance of it must be carefully and strictly concealed.

Nevertheless, the collection and amalgamation together, as it were, in a heap, and in some disorder and confusion, of a vast number of different ideas and images, altogether varying in their nature one from another, and many of them wild and uncouth and rude, has very often, and in particular instances, a great effect in rendering a description or representation striking and effective in its way. This appears to be the secret and the charm of some of Chaucer's pieces. Shakspeare and Milton also occasionally resort to this mode. Indeed, the very presence of disorder and confusion, if skilfully managed and kept in due subjection, sometimes contributes, more than anything, to give life and reality to the composition.

Illustrations of this are afforded in the account by Virgil of the storm at sea, which is quoted at length in the subsequent chapter;* in the battle pieces of Homer and Milton, and in the descriptions by Chaucer of the forest and of crime,† as also in some musical compositions of this character. In pictorial composition also the same principle applies, of which illustrations may be seen in some of the designs of Salvator Rosa, and in numerous battle-pieces and storms. Both in poetry and in eloquence, however, the due order and arrangement of the composition are in general essential, and the rule is only to be de-

* Chapter X. Sect. 12. † *Vide post*, Sect. 8.

parted from in extraordinary and special cases. But even then a degree of order should rule over and regulate the very disorder that is tolerated. Still less in architectural design can any extensive departure from the principle here inculcated be permitted, although a certain disorder, or rather irregularity and wildness, may in some cases, after the fashion of nature, be effectively introduced. The same rule is also applicable to acting and to costume. In the former the irregularity of passion, and in the latter the rudeness of nature, can occasionally be imitated and allowed. More especially is this the case in gardening, where an amount of wildness and confusion in some parts of the composition, but so that absolute disorder and displeasing effect are not thereby produced, adds considerably to its charms, as we see indeed sometimes effected in nature, which is ever the most correct guide in artistical composition.

III. The importance of variety, amounting even to contrast, in artistical efforts, so far as regards its generally pleasing effect upon the mind, independent of its power in contributing to the production of beauty, has already been alluded to while considering the principles of delineation. Variation of forms is, however, that which comes chiefly into consideration in artistical composition, although varieties of other kinds have also to be regarded. What variety is to delineation or design, variation of forms is to composition. Here, as in the other cases, the principle, although the same in itself, differs in the mode of its application. Variety relates only to the parts of one figure, variation to all the several figures and groups of figures in the composition.

In the due regulation of variety, nature is the surest, and the only infallible guide. By her we shall be taught not to be too sparing nor too lavish in the observance of this principle, which on the one hand leads to insipidity, on the other to distortion, while nature pursues the just medium between the two points.

The most perfect example of the variation of forms, and of colours also, is, moreover, afforded by nature, whether in the landscape scenes that she presents, or in the different shapes of animals and vegetables, which vary one from another in every

possible way, but ever harmoniously, tastefully, and I may say artistically.

Thus, in accordance alike with the practice which we see pursued in nature, and the principles which have been laid down for our guide in art, a due degree of variation must be effected among the different figures and groups in a composition, so that not only they themselves be varied, but the variation itself should be also varied.

It is indeed worthy of observation that variety may be as formal, and regular, and constrained, as the want of it; like the variety of a marching regiment, or of a row of pillars.

In nature, however, variation is effected in the most perfect manner, and exists even with regard to those figures and objects which appear to be most uniform and regular in their arrangement, such as a flock of sheep, or a grove of trees, where each separate object when dispersed over a landscape, will be diversified in every possible mode as regards the composition of the whole group. Indeed, not only variety but contrast, as seen in nature, is constantly exhibited, and gives to it effect and vigour, in precisely the same way that it does to compositions in art. Thus age not only varies from, but contrasts with youth; the storm with the calm; darkness with light.

On the other hand, equal care should be taken not to make this variation either too excessive as regards its limits, or too formal as regards its manner. This indeed may result, as already observed, in the production of a variety which is itself unvaried, creating the very monotony, and in the most aggravated form, which it was intended to prevent, and presenting an effect at once highly displeasing, and thoroughly inartistical.

Forcible examples of this style are nevertheless afforded by some early works in painting and sculpture. But the most striking are those which the mode of laying out gardens in the middle of the last century presents to us. Connected with this subject, is the practice equally opposed to the true principles of art, of varying the composition by the introduction of figures or subjects which have in their nature no real relation to it.

To a certain extent, variety of light and shade, and of colour, as well as of form, demands attention in artistical composition as much as in design. And as the aspect of objects, both architectural and natural, is considerably altered by the relative position in which and from which we view them, which changes their apparent form; so is it also as regards the variety of light and shade which at different times falls upon them, and which changes their visual or apparent character in a very essential manner, corresponding with such mutations. Indeed, with regard to architectural and also sculptural composition, a due attention to the proper regulation and proportionate distribution of light and shade, is even more essential than in composition in painting, inasmuch as variation of colour is, but to a very limited extent, available in the two former. In compositions in gardening and costume, it is also to be observed; and as regards the due apportionment of light and serious, of lively and grave passages, a principle closely analogous to it may be laid down with respect to compositions in poetry, eloquence, and music.

The introduction of Christian and pagan representations into the same composition, is a decided breach of taste in many great works of art; as, for instance, that of Charon in Michael Angelo's 'Last Judgment.' Such a conjunction is in every way inharmonious and unnatural. Beings of characters and qualities so different could never be supposed to come in contact, or even to exist together; and a jarring of ideas is produced by the incoherency of the representation. The very nature and principle of taste require that the various constituents of the same composition should be apt and suitable, and combine harmoniously together.

Although repetition should be avoided, yet reiteration often gives effect and vigour to a composition; and this, whether in the grouping of figures or the structure of sentences.

IV. As the principles of design, including those of delineation, have been considered as mainly and strictly applicable to single figures and individuals viewed by themselves independently; so, as already observed, those of composition may be deemed to relate generally and properly to figures in groups,

and to the disposition of them as regards their relation one to another. The disposition of figures must, however, necessarily in many respects, be governed by rules wholly different to those which regulate the individual formation and construction of these figures separately, although based on the same principles. The effect of the representation often, indeed, depends as much upon the proper disposition, as upon the actual nature and constitution of the figures which compose it.

The disposition of figures in a composition is nearly analogous to the disposition of words in a sentence; and the leading considerations which in each case direct the arrangement, must be the perspicuity and force, and pleasing effect and general result of the whole. In this respect, we must in both cases regard alike the independent and essential quality and character of each figure and word by itself; and also the effect produced upon each, and upon the whole, by their several relations with, and particular position in regard to the others. Like the elements in the constitution of picturesque orders, some of these figures will be passive, others active. Some will stand independent by themselves, and some are important only as auxiliary to certain others. Some represent things real and animate, others those which are lifeless and inert. Some are absolutely essential for the completion of the composition; while others might be well, and perhaps advantageously dispensed with. Moreover, as certain chemical compounds are of but little value by themselves, and depend almost wholly for their own effect upon those with which they are mixed; so is it also very often with regard to figures in a composition, which are as much dependent on those about them, as they are on themselves, for the result they may occasion. In music, too, a single note may produce but little effect, while joined with others it may be of the most powerful nature. Thus also of a word which contributes to eloquence in an oration, or of colour which contributes to beauty in a painting. As in the case of the general principles of design already referred to, so also with respect to the proper distribution of the figures in a composition, nature is the best guide, and affords an example in nearly every scene she presents, where the harmonious and

effective disposal of the different characters and groups may be observed.

With respect to some points, however, there are certain axioms or rules to be kept in view with regard to artistical composition, which proceed quite beyond any of the principles of design, although they may be somewhat analogous to, and have their germ in them. This is the case with the axiom now about to be propounded, which is one of the first that is necessary to be observed in relation to the disposition of the figures in a composition, and which consists in the division of them into principal and subordinate; the former of these being the leading hero in the piece, and to whom all the others bend, of which we have many forcible examples in different renowned artistical compositions.

The principal figure in the piece is indeed to the subordinate what the face is to the rest of the body, in which respect composition is strictly analogous to delineation. Such figure may be distinguished alike by its height, by the light which falls upon it, or by the particular part of the composition which it occupies. Although it should at once appear and strike the eye, the mode of its doing so is a matter of no moment. Every figure should be complete as regards itself, though incomplete as regards the whole composition. Moreover, the different figures should, by their proper disposition, not only aid the effect of the entire piece, but that of each other also. In painting, the examples which serve to illustrate this principle are numerous, and may be seen in every great work of this kind. In eloquence and poetry, how much depends on the due disposition of the ideas and metaphors excited or described! They owe nearly as much to their appropriate placing, as to their individual character. This is one of the main tests of the skill of the highest composers in each art. Shakspeare is very successful in this respect, and throughout his plays the due distribution of the figures or characters who compose the piece is admirably preserved. In architectural composition, the proper regulation of the several parts of the building, is analogous to the disposition of the figures in a composition in painting. In acting, the placing of the performers proceeds upon principles

closely analogous to those observed with regard to compositions in painting. And in gardening also, corresponding rules are obviously and easily applicable as regards the laying out of the grounds, and the disposal of various objects, whether in the shape of trees, or borders, or rocks, or pieces of water.

V. The same principles which are applicable for our guidance in the distribution of the different figures in a composition are also applicable to the distribution of the different groups. And as in figures the principal one takes the lead, and all the others are subordinate to it; so among groups there is in a corresponding manner a principal one to which the other groups are subordinate. Here also, as in the cases already mentioned, nature is the best and the surest guide, and affords the fullest example both of the observance of this principle, and of the advantages resulting from its due observance.

Indeed, in the disposal of groups as well as in the arrangement of figures, nature exhibits a variation at once infinite and astonishing; and this she effects moreover in those groups which might be expected on a calculation to appear the most monotonous and unvaried. Thus, in the disposal of the starry firmament, where each object out of thousands closely resembles the other alike in shape and colour and general appearance; such is the arrangement of the different planets and groups and clusters and constellations, that the utmost variety is produced.

It is, however, further to be observed that in nature the principle of perspective, which at once of itself causes a considerable apparent difference in size of many figures and groups, according to their respective relative distance from the eye, greatly conduces to assist in her this variation. Many objects which when viewed together appear exactly similar, by the effect of perspective seem totally different. Distance, moreover, has the effect of changing the appearance of objects not only as regards their size, but their shape and colour. In compositions in painting and bas-relief, where all the groups are equidistant from the eye, we must copy the effect produced by nature as the result of perspective. In sound, distance occasions also a variation or modulation, the effect of which

must be imitated in music, analogously to the mode in which perspective is availed of in painting.

The limbs of a figure are to the figure what the figure itself is to the group, and the group itself to the whole composition.

The precise mode of regulating the disposal of figures and groups in a composition, is beyond the scope of the rules of art. This principle must necessarily vary according to the nature of the particular composition, or the mental capacities of the composer. Not only should each figure in the composition further the general design, but each attitude and expression and form and gesture should contribute to the uniform result of the whole; and the very shape and character of the limbs should accord with and conduce to add effect to the form and expression of the features. The contortions of the body should, as it were, echo or shadow the character displayed by the countenance, as the latter must be supposed to reflect the emotions of the soul.

In the painting of the 'Last Judgment' by Michael Angelo, the various groups collected in it, although each bearing their part in the whole design, appear as distinct and independent, and consequently as capable of disposition, as the individual figures themselves; and therefore admit as fully of the principles here enunciated being applied to them. This is also equally the case with groups of figures or buildings or trees in a landscape. But in every case, however independent each group may appear, it should contribute to aid the general effect of the composition.

VI. The various personages and parts in a composition should bear the same relation to one another, and to the principal figure or individual in it, as the different members of the same body, although varying extensively in their nature and purposes, and exercising very different functions one from the other, bear to one another, and especially to the head. Indeed, the several features in a particular individual face may be made to match as ill one with another as the different limbs in the same figure, or the different figures in the same group.

Although these several parts of the composition may be

all actually disconnected, they are all related to each other. Each part, as it were, fits and adapts itself to the rest; and each is essential for the completion of the whole. Like the different creations in nature, all bear their respective and appropriate parts in the same grand system; or like the various animals of the same species, although they are each different, and each independent one of another, yet they are all of the same nature, and all aid in the economy of the race.

The subordination to the principal of the secondary parts of the composition, should also be analogous to what we see in the civil government of a country, where each person preserves his proper gradation, from the supreme ruler, through all the various ranks. Moreover, by the observance of this principle the several portions of the composition are not only united together, but are made to occupy and preserve their due and appointed position.

Not only should every figure and every expression and action contribute to the general effect, but whatever does not tend to this purpose more or less deteriorates from it. A useless figure is an intruder, and hinders the development of the story. And there should be the same harmony and proportion between the different figures and colours and lights and shades in a picture, as between the different parts and colours and shades of each object in it.

A considerable effect as regards the general vigour and impressiveness of the entire piece, is produced by the concentration together into one composition of a variety of different objects and circumstances which all tend to the same result, and to excite the same emotions in the mind, whether painful or pleasurable, and whether of sublimity, beauty, terror, or surprise. In the 'Last Judgment' of Michael Angelo, notwithstanding the great diversity of incidents represented, every attendant circumstance, as well as the expression and attitudes of the various figures, contribute to the result of the whole. This is also seen in Raphael's admirable cartoons of 'Christ's Charge to Peter,' and of 'Paul Preaching at Athens;' and is, indeed, a characteristic feature of excellence in all the compositions by Raphael. Attention to nature is of great use

in this branch of art; and her example, and the effect of it here, are deserving of attentive observation, and of close imitation.

This principle is obvious in all architectural compositions, as well as in those in music and eloquence; in the management of a dramatic representation, and in the arrangement of the parts of a dress. In gardening, too, it should always regulate the composition. In each of the arts, moreover, the general style of the composition should ever be throughout in accordance with, and should bear relation to the subject of it, and to the particular characters introduced.

VII. The maintenance of a complete and harmonious unity of object and purpose in the conduct of the representation, is a matter of essential importance in artistical composition of each kind, and contributes alike to the perspicuity of the design, and to its general vigour and effect. This rule is applicable alike to delineation and to composition; but it is more essential in the latter than in the former, as there are both more independent parts requiring to be united, and from their greater variety there is more danger of their being disunited and acting discordantly in composition than in delineation. As one principal figure should always stand out as the foremost, so one main design should ever be obvious, to which all subordinate purposes should contribute and lend their aid. If the attention of the mind is divided, the perception is confused, and the impression much weakened. Hence, the union together of the different parts of a composition is an essential principle to be kept in view. It is, indeed, alone by this means, that all the various figures and groups become amalgamated into one whole; that they are made in reality to constitute a composition, instead of remaining independent objects.

Unity of design in composition is analogous to unity of purpose in action, and is essential to give effect and vigour to the design or representation. If the current is diverted, it loses its strength, and the various streams which meander through the country have nothing of the force which they would possess when united into one vast torrent. So is it in artistical composition of each kind. In Michael Angelo's 'Last Judg-

ment,' the result is much weakened by this want of unity of subject, which is indeed the great defect of the picture, although the unity of purpose is still preserved; and to the observance of this principle, Raphael's renowned cartoons owe much of their force and effect.

Although several distinct representations may be aimed at by the different groups in the picture, as is the case indeed in the cartoons; yet the effect, the general impression produced by the whole, should be one and the same. Here all the streams should meet, and should concentrate their forces. An epic poem may have many episodes; yet they should not only unite in one story, but all conduce to add effect to the main narrative which it contains.

Unity is essential alike to a design in painting or sculpture, a description in poetry or eloquence, a composition in architecture, music, costume, or gardening, and a dramatic representation. In each case the main channel of ideas must be kept open and clear, although a certain number of episodes may with advantage be introduced along with it. The lesser streams, however, should feed, not drain the main river; and should also maintain a part so subordinate as to be always clearly distinguishable from it, although they ought at the same time to preserve their connection with it.

The various figures and parts in a composition should, indeed, be so united as to be each essential constituents of that composition, as well as related to one another; and each should moreover be necessary to the place which it fills. If a figure or a metaphor may as well be in one part of the composition as another, it may probably be as well out of it altogether.

As all the different branches, however varied or diverging, are part of the same tree, so all the different figures in a representation are portions of the same composition. By preserving the unity of the subject the whole intent of the composition is evinced at once, and thus all our ideas are directed in the proper course. In every composition the entire design should appear to be directed to one object, to proceed from one mind, and to be of the same character.

Moreover, as distraction of the mind is ever displeasing, and

what the mind always appears especially to shun, and as the promotion of gratification is, on the other hand, one of the leading objects of art; so disunity, which is particularly calculated to promote the former, should be ever avoided.

But there is a governing principle in composition as regards the union and harmony of parts, not only in groups but in single figures, and not only in figures, but even as regards the parts of a figure; as in the human countenance, in which the expression of the various features should be all harmoniously blended so as to produce one effect.

As in the case of variation of forms, so in an analogous manner in that of unity, it should be at the same time free from uniformity. It should be the unity of nature, not that of mechanism. It should resemble rather the unity in form of an animal or a tree, than the uniformity in shape of a piece of furniture, or of a machine. Here, as in many cases of ethics as well as art, the right line lies between the two extremes.

It is the province of correct judgment and true taste to guide us aright to this happy medium.

VIII. In addition to the direct application of the various principles already enumerated for artistical composition, there are certain collateral and indirect means to be resorted to, which are of essential importance both in themselves and for aiding the effect and the operation of others; and which are not the less striking because, as in many of the works of nature, their immediate result is not perceivable.

Design, indeed, of single figures, in common with composition, admits of auxiliaries of this kind; but the more complicated the performance, the greater is the opportunity for and the greater is the need of this assistance. The present subject, therefore, belongs more properly to composition than to delineation, although to a large extent common to both. Of these auxiliaries, the introduction and use of ornament is probably the most frequent and the most efficient.

An ornament may be defined to be some object or subject which is of itself directly calculated to call forth pleasing ideas in the mind relating to, or associated with the composition; but which object or subject is, nevertheless, of itself,

wholly independent of, and not at all necessarily connected with it.

Ornaments contribute to the effect of an artistical composition, in a manner analogous to that in which particular traits of conduct contribute to the moral character of a man. They give a bias to the whole, and are regarded when more important and essential points are overlooked. We judge, not by what is before us, but by what strikes us. To a certain extent, and in certain cases, ornament is not only desirable, but essential in each of the arts. It is effective in itself, and it is effective also as a cause of variety. So important, indeed, is the proper and judicious use of ornament, that it has, in some instances, served to confer merit on performances which were utterly devoid of every good quality. It conduces as much as anything, to give a character to a work of art. But as its proper use is highly advantageous, so its abuse is proportionably deleterious and dangerous.

As regards the amount of ornament to be bestowed on any particular work of art, much must of course depend on the character of the work. Some of the most striking and effective productions have been composed without the addition of any ornament whatever. Such are the statues of the 'Venus de Medicis,' and the 'Apollo Belvedere.' Nor do they suffer anything from the want of it, possessing, indeed, in themselves all that ornament could bestow. Some of the finest of Cicero's orations are those which have the least ornament.

Ornaments and episodes are, as it were, props or resting places to relieve the monotony of a long and unvaried, or too exciting story. Ornaments should, as far as practical, while aiding the composition, be made useful; and the directly useful portions of the design should, in their turn, be rendered ornamental. Or rather, the useful parts should be so adapted as to be of themselves ornamental, and the ornamental parts to be useful. The principle that the useful and the ornamental should ever be united, and as much as possible be rendered identical, is especially essential, as it is also exemplified in eloquence.

Ornaments, in their management and disposition, should be

subject to the same rules as episodes, and the other adjuncts to a composition. Care should, moreover, be taken, that what are intended for ornaments should be not merely additions, but serviceable also to the composition into which they are introduced. They should be calculated to give animation to, as well as to second the general effect intended to be produced. Auxiliaries of this nature should not only add to the narration, but really aid the story. Some of them, on the other hand, merely conduce to interrupt it, and divert instead of direct the attention. In each of the arts, the value of ornament depends entirely on the skill used in the application of it. According as this is the case, it becomes a regimen or a poison, a beauty or a defect. It may be its brightest glory, or its grossest blemish.

Ornament in painting is in the nature either of shape or colour. The same principles are applicable for its use in either case. In each case, too, its main value consists in giving vigour and effect to the whole design; and the true test of its appropriateness is whether it succeeds here.

Two things should, therefore, especially be observed as to ornament in whatever branch of art:—1. They should be auxiliary to the whole design. 2. They should be in character with the composition in which they are used.

Ornaments which do not aid, perplex or mar the general aim and object. Ornaments differing in their nature from the design, destroy its effect, as, for instance, gaudy ornaments in a grand composition, which are subversive of its dignity.

In all the arts, in painting, sculpture, poetry, and architecture, equally with music and eloquence, and also acting, costume, and gardening, excessive ornament deteriorates from the composition; and the more exalted its nature, the more it is liable to be thus injured by being enervated and debased. Ornament, indeed, may be invaluable; but it is allowable only as an auxiliary to art. When it assumes the rank of a principal it deserves to be deposed. Indeed, if ornament, either in painting or architecture, is carried too much into detail, or is made too minute, it is apt to degenerate the whole performance from one of beauty into mere prettiness. This is equally

the case in poetry and eloquence, and more or less in each of the arts.

Drapery is the leading auxiliary in compositions in painting where figures are introduced, as, by this means, character and rank and action are conferred to a certain degree, in a manner corresponding with that in which in a landscape the shape and aspect of the clouds gives a character to a representation of that description. Indeed, the various features assumed by the sky, and the forms and colours which the clouds are capable of exhibiting in so many varieties, render them valuable auxiliaries in art as regards effect. Not only in painting, but in poetry also, have they been thus availed of. Probably, indeed, no appearance in external nature possesses so much variety and so much character as do the clouds. There is often, moreover, a silent poetry in nature which speaks to us in her own language, and which is quite independent of any artistical results in the composition, that we might desire to produce. Thus, in a landscape, the beauty of the tints, the variety of the foliage, the harmony of the whole, form a combination of images, excite a flood of picturesque ideas of themselves, which the most elaborate efforts will fail to attain. Colour and light and shade are, however, of course, not to be considered so much as auxiliaries, as essential and leading ingredients in a composition in painting; although occasionally, striking effects with respect to them, as in sunsets or moonlight scenes, may be strictly so regarded.

The principal elements of composition in landscape scenery are mountains, rocks, buildings, wood, water, foliage, and plains. These objects may be respectively diversified to an almost infinite extent, and admit of contrast and effect, corresponding with the application of all the other elements available in artistical composition. The mountains and buildings about it form the auxiliary objects in, as they constitute also the background to an architectural structure. And to the nature of these due regard in the construction of his edifice ought ever to be had by the architect.

Metaphor is one of the ordinary auxiliary ornaments made use of in poetry and eloquence. An immense field is afforded

to the artist by this means for obtaining auxiliaries for the illustration of, and for giving effect to the narrative. Many things may be availed of for this purpose, which though directly foreign to the matter, have an indirect and an ideal relation to it. A metaphor, indeed, when of a suitable nature and aptly introduced, will often contribute to give a tint or glow to a subject, which appears to be reflected as it were from the object from which the metaphor is borrowed; thus the sea, the sun, or a flower, when resorted to as metaphors, attach to the topic to which they are applied the ideas of immensity, glory, and beauty, so peculiar to themselves. Nevertheless all such metaphors must be excluded as are foreign to the subject. Metaphors and similes, like representations in art generally, should, moreover, be calculated to gratify the spectator, never to disgust or nauseate him. The vast number of striking, effective, and moving ideas and metaphors that are all brought together and combined into one description or composition, is what often renders it so powerful and so affecting. This is especially observable in the following quotation from Shakspeare's 'Henry the Fourth':—

"All furnish'd, all in arms:
All plum'd like estriches that wing the wind;
Baited like eagles having newly bath'd;
Glittering in golden coats, like images;
As full of spirit as the month of May,
And gorgeous as the sun at midsummer.
Wanton as youthful goats, wild as young bulls.
I saw young Harry with his beaver on,
His cuisses on his thighs, gallantly arm'd,
Rise from the ground like feather'd Mercury;
And vaulted with such ease into his seat
As if an angel dropp'd from the clouds
To turn and wind a fiery Pegasus,
And witch the world with noble horsemanship."*

The same remarks are applicable to the passages which follow from Chaucer; the first containing a description of a forest, the other affording a representation of crime:—

* Part i. act iv. scene 1.

"First on the wall was peinted a forest,
In which ther wonneth neyther man ne best,
With knotty knarry barrein trees old
Of stubbes sharpe and hidous to behold;
In which ther ran a romble and a swough,
As though a storme shuld bresten every bough."*

. . . . . .

"Ther saw I first the derke imagining
Of felonie, and alle the compassing;
The cruel ire, red as any glede,
The pikepurse, and eke the pale drede;
The smiler with the knif under the cloke,
The shepen brenning with the blake smoke;
The tresen of the mordring in the bedde,
The open werre, with woundes all bebledde,
Conteke with blody knif, and sharp manace,
All full of chirking was that sorry place.
The sleer of himself yet I saw there,
His herte-blood hath bathed all his here:
The naile ydriven in the shode on hight,
The colde deth, with mouth gaping upright.
Amiddes of the temple sat mischance,
With discomfort and sory contenance,
Yet saw I woodnesse laughing in his rage,
Armed complaint, outhees, and fiers outrage;
The carraine in the bush, with throte ycorven,
A thousand slaine, and not of qualme ystorven."†

If we take away from these descriptions all but the bare account of the scene, and strip them of all the metaphors and similes that are introduced to give effect to the composition, how spiritless and dull and poor will the representation appear!

To architecture, as much as to painting and sculpture, the leading principles of composition are entirely applicable; more especially as regards the distribution of the different objects, or figures, or masses, which contribute to make up the building, or group of buildings, the disposal and arrangement of the lights and shadows, the laws of contrast, of effect, and of harmony. Moreover architecture equally with, if not more fully than any of the arts, serves to elucidate the rules of composition as regards the skilful use of ornament, and other artistical auxiliaries.

* The Knightes Tale. † *Ibid.*

In costume, in acting, and in gardening, the application of ornament is of equal value with its use in the other arts. Probably, indeed, costume owes more to ornament than do any of them, inasmuch as it is of itself wholly and essentially ornamental in its nature. In the laying out and composition of cities, the introduction of groves, and fountains, and greens, and pools, and gardens affords a great relief, and its effect is picturesque; while statues and columns are no less serviceable in ornamental grounds.

In the disposition of the gardens annexed to some of our suburban villas, which we frequently see effected with so much ingenuity and taste, the acumen and cultivation of the town are availed of in the improvement and bringing to perfection the materials which the country affords.

Both in ornamental-ground disposition and in painting, the real object is not to thwart or to distort nature, but to develope and display it to the fullest extent, and to correct those blemishes and defects which accident, or some other causes, disturbing nature, have occasioned; and which are no more an essential part of nature, than a tumour or a fracture is an essential part of a living frame.

IX. The examples afforded in the last chapter from the cartoons of 'Paul Preaching at Athens,'* and of 'Christ's Charge to Peter,' serve as admirable illustrations of the principles laid down with regard to composition in art. In both these works the subject is arranged in such a manner that we see at once the meaning of the painter; the most orderly method prevails in his mode of relating the story, and in the composition, which throughout is varied so as to be pleasing to the eye, and to accord with what we see in nature; the principal figure in the piece is at once perceived by his dignity and gesture, and towards him all the subordinate figures are directed; while the different groups are arranged with the utmost propriety. Each part of the picture, moreover, contributes to the general design, and one object only is aimed at by the artist; the draperies, buildings, landscape and background in each case aid materially the effect of the whole.

* *Vide ante*, Chapter VIII. Sects. 3, 5.

It is not often that in sculptural efforts a large number of figures is introduced. But when this is the case, the principles of composition are fully as applicable to representations in this art as they are to those in painting. In proof of this we may refer to the Elgin Marbles, where, as in the productions of Raphael, we are struck with the admirable and perspicuous manner in which the composition is arranged, the mode in which the whole is varied, the excellent and judicious disposition alike of the several figures and groups, the manner in which each of the different portions contributes to the effect of the entire design, and the unity which prevails in the representation, notwithstanding the number of personages in the composition.

But no less in poetry, than in visible representations by painting and sculpture, do the foregoing principles of composition admit of elucidation; although here, it may be less easy to quote particular passages in illustration of them. The 'Iliad,' the 'Æneid,' and 'Paradise Lost,' as regards their whole structure and composition throughout, the design and management of the entire story, the disposition of the various characters, and the introduction of the several scenes and incidents, might be appealed to as examples of the strict adherence to these rules, which it is unnecessary to recapitulate. In every well-constructed oration, too, their observance must be enforced, and will essentially contribute to its merit and effect.

In music no less than in poetry, the leading principles of composition are necessary to be observed, as may be seen by reference to every grand oratorio of the greatest masters; and to architecture all its principles are clearly applicable.

Indeed, in no art more than in architecture may the principles of composition be more fully availed of, and to none are they more essential; more especially as regards the arrangement and order of the composition, the variation of its parts, the due relation of its constituents to each other, the preservation of the unity of the entire subject, the maintenance of a principal object or figure in the composition, the subordination of the collateral parts to the leading features and general design of the whole, and the proper use of ornament.

In architecture, indeed, the principles of composition regulate alike the structure of the principal building, of its several adjuncts, as also its relative component portions, and the ornaments and appendants which contribute to its completion. The most perfect buildings may be appealed to as examples of this rule. In the position, moreover, of the edifice, and the adaptation of it to surrounding objects, the exercise of the foregoing principles is resorted to, and great skill may be displayed in their use.

Composition, as regards the due placing of buildings with regard to site, the different objects near them, and the mode in which the light will fall, is therefore as fully important in architecture as it is in painting or sculpture. Edifices in general, indeed, are great or small, light or dark, much more by comparison with others, than from their own independent size, or shape, or colour.

In dramatic acting, the rules of composition are as essential as in any of the arts, and contribute as extensively to the success of the performance; more especially as regards its arrangement and order, the placing of the figures, especially in maintaining one principal figure or personage in the piece, and the subservience to him of those that are secondary or inferior, the disposition of the groups, and the maintenance of unity throughout the composition. The performance should, moreover, receive such adventitious aids from independent sources, as compositions in painting do from backgrounds.

Costume, too, owes as much to the principles of composition in respect to the due regulation, variety, and harmony of its different parts, and the fusion of them all into a complete whole, as do any of the arts. Gardening also, as regards the general style of laying out the grounds, may derive essential advantage from their observance; and by this means nature will not be distorted, but will be only directed in her right and accustomed course. More especially in the grouping of the trees, and the arrangement of the whole as regards the undulation of the ground, and the proper distribution of foliage, water, rock, and lawn, these principles may be fully exerted, and skilfully applied.

Gardening admits of the application of the principles of composition as regards the ground itself, whether plain or undulating; and of the artistical disposition of objects, whether trees, rocks, plantations, buildings, or beds of flowers. These operations constitute also the elements that are rendered available in compositions of this kind. And the disposal and arrangement of these several forms are capable of infinite variety, alike with regard to shape and colour, and light and shade. The parks and pleasure-grounds of our nobility afford excellent examples of composition in this art, and of the successful application to it of the principles here laid down.

Occasionally, when the character of the country admits of this being done, distant objects and points of view, and even openings for landscape scenery, may be availed of, and, as it were, introduced and embodied in the composition; and whether this be effected by cutting down trees, removing buildings, or lowering part of a hill. A distant sea view, or the summit of a mountain, when these are conspicuous from the garden or grounds, contributes as essentially to the general effect of the composition, as does a tree, or a building, or a piece of water standing within its confines.

The principles of gardening may, moreover, be applied not only to the laying out of grounds which are expressly ornamental, but to the general improvement of our landscape scenery, especially as regards the correction of deformities, and the removal of unsightly objects which mar its natural beauties. By the addition of a few trees either to form an object in a particular locality, or to introduce new tints in the foliage, by a slight alteration in the course of a rivulet, or by the construction of a cascade in a suitable spot, the whole character and composition of the scenery may be advantageously varied; and nature will be not so much changed as corrected, or rather restored.

CHAPTER X.

DESCRIPTION, NARRATION, AND ACTION IN ARTISTICAL REPRESENTATION.

I. The principles laid down in this work relative to delineation and to composition, are, to a great extent, applicable to description, and also to narration and action, which are, as it were in art, the active principles, of which the two former are the passive; delineation, moreover, being composition in the singular number, while composition is but delineation in the plural.

Reference has already been made to the power of imitation which the mind possesses, and by which it is able to effect representations of certain objects in nature, closely resembling, in some of their qualities the things so imitated. This power of imitation is, as we have seen, largely exercised during design. By description, however, we present not so much the imitation of an object, as an account of a transaction; and by description, narration, and action together, is afforded a history of the various movements and proceedings that make up an event of importance which is the subject of artistical effort. In every case, however, even where an adequate and forcible description of a transaction is rendered, and by whatever art, the leading characteristics only of the subject which that particular art is calculated to describe can be portrayed, indeed alone should be attempted; and on the selection of them with due judgment and discretion, according to the principles enunciated for the regulation of design, mainly depends the efficiency of the description.

Two leading principles are essential to be observed during the process of description by whatever art:—1. The representation of the subject should be effected as regards its most prominent and striking characteristics, or those of them which are capable of being portrayed by the particular art resorted to. 2. The suggestion of certain objects or ideas not immediately perceptible in the subject described, should also be attained.

(1.) In every transaction there is a crisis, or turning-point, on which the whole weight of the event seems hinged. This appears to be the moment which should be seized upon for representation by the painter or sculptor. Indeed, in each episode of the story, there is a crisis of this kind. They are, as it were, the joints in the frame.

Two things, moreover, appear essentially requisite as leading elements in description:—1. The selection of appropriate and striking circumstances, of which the most important in their nature and result are not always the most distinguished in this respect. 2. The connection together of these into a continuous narrative or representation.

All pictures of whatever kind should be, to a certain extent, representative; that is, they should serve in the amplest and most efficient manner to present to us the leading and general appearance and circumstances of the object or event they describe. And this is applicable not only to compositions of an historical or epic class, but also to landscapes, and even to portraits as well, which should serve to represent the peculiar and precise characteristic expression of the individual, and not merely the form of his features, so as to indicate the mind and natural aspect of the person portrayed, and by which he will be recognized by those who know him. Moreover, in the description of an event either in painting, poetry, or any other art, you afford not only a general idea of the occurrence, but you preserve and present to the mind its very essence. The most striking features in the transaction are singled out and recorded. In all descriptions of this class it is, consequently, of the utmost importance to seize upon the leading, prominent, and characteristic circumstances, which mainly serve to distinguish the event. Homer is very successful in this respect,

as are also Shakspeare and Spenser; and in painting, Raphael and Nicolas Poussin greatly here excel. And this is the real secret of the force and effectiveness of their descriptions.

(2.) All description and narration should be suggestive as well as representative or imitative, whether in painting, sculpture, architecture, poetry, eloquence, music, or the other arts. Thus, in painting a landscape, the description of a storm should suggest the rolling of the thunder and the howling of the wind, as well as represent the scenes which it directly portrays. In architectural structures, many objects may be suggested which are not obviously portrayed. Music depends for much of its effect on its suggestive power.

The correct principle in narration appears, indeed, to be that while the main incident in the story is directly represented by the imitative or descriptive power of the art, the episodes in the event should be suggested only by incidental circumstances introduced as auxiliaries. Thus, in many a composition, while but little is directly represented, a great deal may be indirectly suggested. While the former power is limited, the latter is almost infinite. Many ideas, too, may be suggested with great force, which it is utterly impossible to represent or imitate. Imperfect, rough sketches often impress us more strongly than finished pictures, as so much is left for the mind to supply, which is led on in a right direction by the design. In the case of certain elaborate paintings, no scope is allowed to the imagination, but the mind is urged along without any choice as to its course. In poetry and in eloquence, a few general descriptions and leading ideas will frequently serve to convey impressions by suggestion, more forcibly than the most minute particulars.

Similes and metaphors are of equal or greater effect in description and narration than they are in composition. And nature should be observed and followed as attentively with regard to action as with regard to form.

II. Having considered the general principle which regulates the subject before us, we have next to inquire into the proper mode of its application to each particular art, from which it will be seen that these several arts vary from one another in

this respect as extensively as they do in their essential nature. Nevertheless, to each of the arts, although in a different manner, may these principles be applied.

Here, perhaps, I ought to premise that the term narration I have adopted mainly with regard to the representation of a passing event or story, while description is most properly used with reference to a transaction which is not actually progressing. This observation may be applied to each of the arts, as in each narration and description are the leading modes by which the whole operation is carried on. In painting, sculpture, poetry, and eloquence, this is at once obvious. But it is, in reality, no less so in music and in architecture. In the former of these a sound is described, or indeed narrated, being strictly imitated; and by the associations created, even a scene may be represented.

As regards painting, sculpture, poetry, eloquence, music, and acting, these arts are each fitted alike for description, narration, and the representation of action in a direct manner. But with regard to architecture, gardening, and costume, although they may be also adapted both for description and narration, and the representation of action, they are not fitted for them in a direct, but only in an indirect manner, and are merely able to effect them emblematically or symbolically instead of really or literally; as will be seen from the examples of their operation adduced in the following sections of this chapter. Perhaps, indeed, these latter arts may be deemed by some to be strictly in their nature suggestive only, rather than either emblematical, symbolical, or typical, in respect to their mode of describing, narrating, and representing action.

The arts differ, moreover, both in their manner of attaining these great objects, and as regards the power with which they achieve them; as do even those, such as poetry and painting and sculpture, which are most nearly allied to each other. Thus, in poetry, a transaction may be described, not only at the precise period when the principal event to be recorded is taking place, but narrated also in its various stages and proceedings; the mind may be gradually introduced to the event, and the description continued and carried on through all the

circumstances connected with it. In painting and sculpture, however, that instant of time alone in which the action to be represented is achieved, is that which can be actually availed of; although in painting, which admits of a fuller account, and has more scope here than what sculpture possesses, the description may in some measure serve to inform us of what has just preceded, and what is immediately to follow.

The two leading variations of profile and full face serve not inaptly to typify the modes of representation in pictorial art; the first giving more distinctly and forcibly the leading characteristics of the features, the other portraying them more completely and comprehensively, although with less vigour.

The main point to be observed in the selection of a period of representation or description in each of these different arts, is to choose that time which, according to the principle enunciated in the preceding section, serves to afford at once the most complete idea of the critical event in the transaction, and the display of its most important results, as regards the personages represented in the piece.

It is essential, indeed, that the moment described in a composition in painting or sculpture, where one period only of the story can be narrated, should not only be the most important in its nature, but what might be termed the most representative; that is the precise period which will best serve to convey a general idea of the spirit and quality of the transaction as a whole. Such is the crisis in a tragical tale.

A description must, moreover, be sufficient not only to excite ideas respecting, but to afford a representation of a transaction. Any rude design or reference to it may suffice for the former; but it is the province of art only to supply the latter.

The descriptions by art, as in nature, should not merely be real but living. The most powerful narrations are, however, often the simplest, as the deepest streams are also the most placid. We have an example of this in some of the sublimest parts of the Holy Scriptures, especially in the account of the creation. Moreover, both in narration and description, in all the arts alike, there is as much skill evinced in knowing when to end, as where to select the period for representation.

III. Of all the different conditions which are the subject of artistical representation, there is none more important, and, at the same time, more difficult efficiently to describe than that of motion, in which state of being a large number of objects in nature are constantly existent, and which is, indeed, the ordinary condition under which a considerable proportion of them are viewed. The representation of objects in motion is, therefore, essential to be attained, if nature is faithfully to be portrayed. Different arts differ, of course, extensively as to their adaptation to effect this end; as while some of them, such as poetry, music, and dramatic acting seem especially qualified for the description of motion, and indeed are but very imperfectly fitted for that of stationary objects; others, such as painting and sculpture, and more especially architecture and gardening, appear from their nature wholly unadapted to represent motion of any kind. I shall, therefore, endeavour to consider each of these arts in their order as regards their particular capacity for the end before us.

The representation of motion in painting or sculpture by figures, which, from the nature of the art, must remain perfectly stationary, will necessarily be an object of some difficulty efficiently to attain, and might, at first sight, appear wholly impractical. It is effected, however, to some extent, and mainly in two ways:—(1.) By a representation of such an attitude of the figure as will necessarily denote its being in action, as a posture of running or flying. (2.) By the representation of the appearance of certain adjuncts, which, from their very nature, are necessarily more or less in motion; such as drapery blowing in the wind, the sea when agitated into waves. Some figures, on the other hand, are, from their kind, quite unfitted for motion, and whenever represented are, without any effort of the artist, at once perceived to be stationary, such as mountains and houses.

It is to be observed, however, that, even in real objects, all motion is not perceivable. Some bodies, as a bullet from a pistol, fly so swiftly that we cannot see them move; others, as the hands of a clock, move so slowly that their motion is invisible to us. It is therefore only motion of a moderate or

middle kind, which alone we can perceive, that we are called upon to represent.

Real motion itself, indeed, we are wholly unable to depict, but can only describe objects as they appear in motion. Thus, although on the one hand, on viewing them, we know at once by their appearance that they are moving; yet, on the other hand, we view them but for a moment, and only in one position. Painting should therefore both represent them as they are seen when moving, and should fix on some particular attitude in which they actually appear for the moment, and in which they may be fairly represented with perfect truth to nature, as in the case of a flying bird, a ship in a storm, or an army in battle. The image of the object or scene is retained in the eye after a momentary glance at it, as it was visible at that transient instant, and is not obtained from examining and comparing the various movements that occurred. So should it be in pictorial representation, which but follows that which nature effects. Of these different movements, that which is the most striking and affecting should, with judgment, be selected.

Certain objects whose motion is constant, appear, nevertheless, motionless, where that motion is regular and unvarying, and does not change the actual position of the object; as in the case of a waterfall, a shower of rain, a storm, the sea raging when viewed at a distance, a ship sailing, and a carriage travelling towards us. These objects may, therefore, be correctly and efficiently represented in painting.

The chief use of drapery is like that of sails, to assist in action, and to point out the motion of the figure, or rather to second the impression, created by its attitude. It aids however, when so applied, as well to denote repose as action. Flying hair or drapery, like agitated water, must necessarily represent motion, because its position is such that it cannot be permanent, and can only exist in a state of motion.

For the description of motion, poetry is on the whole more adapted than painting, especially as regards the variety of different motions. But poetry is here perhaps, after all, rather suggestive than descriptive. At least it is far more powerful

and successful in suggestion than in description. Painting, on the other hand, which is so successful in description, effects but little by suggestion. There is indeed this essential distinction between the narrations effected by painting and sculpture on the one hand, and by poetry, eloquence, and music on the other; that while the representations of the former are from their nature, whatever be their subject, always necessarily stationary and immovable, those of the latter are always necessarily moving and changing.

An effective description of motion in a confused irregular multitude rapidly hurrying along in disorder, accompanied by discordant noises of different kinds, and which is much heightened by apt comparisons, is contained in the following passage from Chaucer, relating to the pursuit of the fox which had run off with a cock in the widow's farmyard:—

> "They crieden, out! harow and wala wa!
> A ha the fox! and after him they ran,
> And eke with staves many another man;
> Ran Colle our dogge, and Talbot, and Gerlond,
> And Malkin, with hire distaf in hire hond;
> Ran cow and calf, and eke the veray hogges
> So fered were for barking of the dogges,
> And shouting of the men and women eke,
> They ronnen so, hem thought hir hertes breke,
> They yelleden as fendes don in helle;
> The dokes crieden as men wold hem quelle:
> The gees for fere flewen over the trees,
> Out of the hive came the swarme of bees,
> So hidous was the noise."*

A fine and striking representation of the action of a huge living body, is afforded by the following passage in Dante,† where Geryon is described as rising into and flying through the air. The account of his stupendous size, of the efforts that he puts forth, and of his motion while flying, together with the suggestions introduced to set off the narration, alike conduce to give vigour to the scene:—

* 'Canterbury Tales;' the Nonnes Preestes Tale.
† Inferno, canto 17.

"As a small vessel, backening out from land,
Her station quits; so thence the monster loosed,
And, when he felt himself at large, turn'd round
There, where the breast had been, his forked tail.
Thus, like an eel, outstretch'd at length he steer'd,
Gathering the air up with retractile claws.
. . . . . Round me on each part
The air I view'd, and other object none
Save the fell beast. He, slowly sailing, wheels
His downward motion, unobserved of me,
But that the wind, arising to my face,
Breathes on me from below."

In dramatic acting, motion is of course one of the main elements, but it is subject to the principles for artistical regulation, and its accordance with nature is ever of the utmost importance. Indeed, the real difficulty here is, not as in the case of the other arts, already alluded to, how actually to represent, but how duly to regulate motion; not merely how to imitate it, but how to cause it in its mode of operation to imitate the manner of nature which it aims to follow.

In compositions in architecture, costume, and gardening, it is impossible directly to describe or represent motion. In each of these arts motion is, however, capable of being suggested by the mode of carrying out the design. In addition to this it may be observed that, although buildings and trees, and other fixed objects, are incapable of motion, and so far may be considered as less effective in an artistical point than animate objects which continually change their situation, and thereby vary their appearance also; yet, on the other hand, a compensation to some extent is made for this deficiency by the opportunities which occur of seeing them from different positions, so that although they are in reality quite stationary, and never vary their aspect in the least, a new and a different view is afforded us of them at each turn; and as we ourselves shift our position, the very objects themselves seem to move, and to occupy fresh relative stations. Each of these objects changes also according to the various perspective distances at which they are viewed. This is the case with regard to sculptural as well as architectural objects. And it is equally applicable to

rocks and mountains, and even to some extent to landscape scenery generally.

Indeed, the constant change of hues and tints, and light and shade, which takes place both in water and in landscape scenery, whether seas, or lakes, or mountains, or even plains, may be considered as closely allied to, and at all events analogous to motion as regards the alteration of the appearance of these objects, and is essentially productive of quite as much variety as motion itself. Consequently, a change, equivalent to motion, is effected in scenery, even in respect to the most solid and stationary bodies which compose it, by the alterations which constantly occur in the atmosphere, particularly as regards the clouds, by which these different objects not only greatly vary in their appearance at different times, as to their hues and dimensions, and according to their distance from us; but from being at certain periods in part obscured, and at other times brought into clear view, their motion, the alteration of their position as regards sight (the most important point in their relation to us), is as extensive as though real transmigrations of them occasionally occurred. In the case of certain mountains, the shifting of the clouds that hover about their peaks, which are constantly varying the scene, exposing and obscuring alternately different objects and points of view, together with the revolutions of the earth so as to affect their position in regard to the sun, accomplish really all that would be produced by a change of their situation. Occasionally, moreover, an apparent alteration takes place both of form and of colour, as may be witnessed upon the Italian lakes, clouds taking the appearance of mountains, and mountains seeming all at once to be transformed into clouds, while the tints on the surface of the lake itself assume various hues at different periods.

It is more particularly, however, with regard to architectural objects, especially when viewed at a distance, that all the effect is produced of their moving and changing their situation, both individual and relative, by the change of that of the person looking at them, who can thus cause them apparently to assume almost any position that he pleases, whereby they seem to be either near together or far apart, united or joined in one, ac-

cording as he places himself to view them; so that drawings from them made from different points, would almost induce the supposition that these objects themselves occasionally changed their situation.

IV. Motion, so far as it has relation to artistical composition, is of various kinds. But of all the different kinds of motion, that which may strictly be termed vital action, is the most important, as the most nearly allied to nature, and the correct and truthful representation of which is the most difficult to be effected in artistical composition. Moreover, as many of the objects described by art are not only visible but animated; so the representation of them should not only be clear and vigorous, but itself endowed with life. This is mainly attainable in painting and sculpture by their attitudes and apparent motions, which denote them to be necessarily animated in order to effect such actions.

Action, like expression, should, moreover, be natural; it should be that of the street, where people walk unobserved, not that of the stage, where they are conscious of being watched, and constrain each motion accordingly.

A perfect imitation or representation of real animated nature, is, however, beyond the reach of pictorial art. The utmost that we can do is to seize upon some of her most striking characteristics, and transplant them to the canvas. Few persons have even the capacity to observe nature, and to see her as she really is; the blaze of glory which encompasses her face veils it from all vulgar gaze; and even of those who are permitted to view her, but a very small number are qualified to record what they see and feel. Nor are the elements of art, however availed of, fully adapted to this end. As we cannot imitate nature directly and simply, we have recourse to adventitious aids to supply by effect and vigour the animation and spirit possessed by the reality, which must necessarily be more or less wanting in the representation. This is especially the case in the arts of painting, sculpture, and poetry. In representations by painting, or descriptions by poetry or eloquence of some inanimate scene, the idea of it may be conveyed with considerable force and truth, inasmuch as vitality,

which is here wanting, is of all things the hardest to counterfeit, either in art or in reality, especially by inanimate means. And the more animated and active any scene is, the more difficult it is adequately to represent it in art. A verdant landscape, replete with vegetable life, is less easy to portray than a dead rock; and the working of passion and feeling in the human countenance, than an inanimate portrait. Indeed, in this kind of painting the skill of the artist is tested by the fact whether he endows it with life and action, or with the outward semblance only; whether he penetrates to the soul, or only reaches the surface; whether he depicts the mere features, or conveys to us the real image of the mind. As works of art are addressed not only to the senses but to the soul, so they should not merely represent living objects, but, like them, be endowed with animation; and not with form alone, but also with character and spirit. Poetry, eloquence, and music are in several respects fully adapted for the representation of vital action, more especially through the descriptions of it which they are capable of affording. Music, indeed, in many ways describes, and in a direct manner, vital action, both by representing the motions of living beings, and by imitating their cries. An illustration of this is afforded by Handel's oratorio of 'Israel in Egypt,' where the sounds produced by the motions of the frogs and flies is directly and very effectively imitated.

In acting alone, however, vital action as well as motion, is capable of being fully represented; and here, indeed, it exists in reality. Its defect is not that it is not real, but that it is not always true to nature.

Architecture and gardening are, of course, wholly inadapted in a direct manner alike for motion and for vital action. Indirectly, however, the former, if not the latter of these operations, is, to a certain extent, represented by these arts where fountains or running streams constitute a part of the composition. Costume represents vital action so far as it serves to afford to the frame which it covers the free opportunity for this exercise.

V. Where the action represented consists merely in the transient movement of a single figure, this may be considered to be independent in itself, and as having no direct or necessary

relation to the motion which has preceded it, or to that which is to follow. In most cases, however, where an important event is to be described, an effort is made to portray that particular period in the progress of the transaction which is not only the most striking and important, but which may be regarded as representative in itself of the entire proceeding, so far as serving to show its general character and tendency. The action present has in such a case direct relation to, and is absolutely dependent on that which has immediately passed, and on that which is immediately to succeed. It is imperfect in itself, and perfect only so far as it serves to perform its part in uniting the chain of the narrative.

Hence, what is here meant by continuous action, consists in the representation through the medium of art, of the actual and real vivid and active progress of a transaction, and that not only as regards the direct portrayal of the scene which is immediately occurring, but also as regards the indirect, though probably hardly less forcible and truthful representation of those stages of the event which have recently passed by, and those which are immediately to follow, and are inseparably connected with that which is now taking place. The aid of the reason, and to a certain extent of the imagination also, is called in here; but they are appealed to by inferences so obvious which are brought immediately before them and offered to their notice, that the process is performed without any difficulty; and, indeed, the operation of the mind is so impulsive that it appears to be almost spontaneous, if not irresistible.

Continuous action, indeed, is like the current of a river, which has relation to the stream both above and below, and is never stationary for a moment. Even what it possesses of present existence, is relative to and inseparable from the preceding and the future.

In compositions in painting, and upon the principles already deduced, the efficient representation of continuous action may be fully accomplished; and the examples in works of art of this kind cited in the present chapter, show the extent to which this has been done. Raphael's cartoon of the 'Sacrifice at Lystra,' affords a fine illustration of the principle before us, in the com-

position of which is narrated what has lately passed in the transaction, as well as what is about to follow. This is also successfully attained in the 'Last Judgment,' by Michael Angelo.

In sculpture, this is only less completely effected than in painting, because the composition is more simple, and consequently affords fewer facilities for the representation of a complicated transaction. Examples are nevertheless not wanting which evince that in sculpture this result is fully attainable; as for instance, in many of the designs in the Elgin Marbles, in which continuous action is very efficiently described, as also in the group of the Laocoon.

In compositions in architecture, costume, and gardening, no direct representation of continuous action can be effected, although much here may be done in the way of suggestion as regards the several parts of the design that are comprehended in the whole composition, ideas respecting which the portion immediately presented to the eye serves to afford correct and adequate notions.

By means which it is unnecessary to detail, poetry and eloquence are capable of accomplishing the representation of continuous action to a very full, and indeed to a perfect extent; although perhaps here they are even exceeded by the art of music.

In descriptions or narrations by each of these arts, continuous action appears, indeed, of all species of action, to be the most appropriate, and as it were the natural province. But music from its nature has peculiar power in the representation of continuous action, being in this respect the exact counterpart to painting, sculpture, and architecture, which are in themselves essentially and utterly motionless, while the very principle of music is continuous motion.

Acting is not only completely adapted for the representation of continuous action, but continuous action is itself actually essential for the sustenance of efforts in this art, and is perhaps the main basis of its operations.

VI. Not merely, however, if nature is truly to be represented, are motion and action, and also continuous action to be portrayed, but that which has not only immediately, but which has

for some time passed; and that which is not only immediately, but which is for some time prospective, as well as immediately past and present action, must be described. Different arts differ extensively as to their capability to effect this end; and some of those which appear the least adapted to represent motion, such as painting and sculpture, exhibit to us with the greatest clearness that which is past and prospective; while certain arts, such as music and acting, whose peculiar province it is to express motion, are here, to a large extent, unsuccessful. Suggestion is, of course, in many cases, much more potent and more efficient in the representation of action, past and prospective, than is direct description, inasmuch as its sphere is far more extended.

By the skill of the artist in some of the great efforts in historical composition in painting, we have represented to us with perspicuity and energy, not only the transaction which is in actual progress and continuous, but that also which has recently happened, and that moreover which is about to take place, and which are more or less independent of and unconnected with the event that is immediately occurring. Thus, in the cartoon by Raphael, of 'The Beautiful Gate of the Temple,' we behold not merely the action in progress of commanding the lame man to rise, but are informed of what has lately been done by the principal objects in the scene, and of the sacrifices about to take place. Raphael's cartoon of 'The Death of Ananias,' is also a fine illustration of the successful representation by pictorial art of action at once past, present, and prospective; where the past acts of Ananias are denoted by his position, and the attitude and expression and demeanour of those about him; while the approach in the background of the persons who are to carry him to his burial, and of his wife who is soon to follow his example and his fate, narrate to us no less forcibly what will shortly happen.

Poetry and eloquence have, however, here the greatest power to accomplish the desired purpose, as their range is as unbounded as is the extent of the subject they describe. That, moreover, which painting and sculpture can effect only by suggestion, they attain by literal narration. Architecture can

do nothing directly as regards the representation or record of action, either past or prospective. Indirectly, indeed, it may attain this object so far as it serves to raise trophies of achievements which have happened in times past, or to usher in those about to be performed.

Gardening is also, of course, wholly inadapted directly to represent action, either past present or prospective. In one respect, indeed, it may be said indirectly to narrate action, both past and prospective, so far as the fading of the flowers and leaves tells us of the glories of the summer that has passed away, and of the rude blasts and storms of winter that are approaching; while the buds and early shoots proclaim in turn the coming spring. This circumstance may, moreover, serve to remind us that a valuable hint as to the mode of narration in historical composition, may be obtained from nature herself in many of the scenes she displays, especially those of the kind just alluded to. So in observing a storm, we see at once the devastation which has ensued, and also what is threatened, as well as learn the condition of the objects represented before it broke out. A ruin, too, tells us alike of the decay now progressing, and of the former state of the impaired edifice.

Costume can only be said to represent or typify past or future action, so far as it is either emblematical of certain customs or actions which were performed in past ages; or as it serves, as in the case of armour, or costume adapted for dramatic purposes, to suggest those particular actions in which it especially adapts the wearer of it to partake.

VII. The importance of maintaining the unity of the subject in artistical composition of each kind, has already been demonstrated in the preceding chapter.* No less essential is the preservation of unity of action among all the different personages in a transaction which forms the topic of artistical description or narration. Indeed, however busily engaged the several individuals represented in a composition of this kind may appear to be, and however various the nature of the different actions carried on, it is of essential importance that a

* *Vide ante*, Chapter IX. Sect. 7.

strict and complete unity of action and co-operation should pervade and control the whole. Like the different soldiers of a regiment engaged in conflict, although each, to a certain extent, acts by himself independently, yet they all act in concert together, all obey the same word of command, and the efforts of all are alike directed to the attainment of the same object. Or the principle and operation of unity of action in pictorial composition, may be perhaps best illustrated by that of tune in music. Here a variety of instruments of different kinds, and of voices as well, may all be sounding together; yet, however dissimilar in character, they all tend to produce, and all harmonize in one tune. So in pictorial composition, there may be many different characters, who are moreover represented as engaged in occupations of a very different nature; but they should all conduce to telling the same story, and should each aid in the general effect which the composition, as a whole, is intended to produce.

Nevertheless, this unity of action, as regards the general regulation of the composition, is not by any means intended to exclude the introduction of episodes or minor independent events which, however, should at the most but vary or relieve, and ought never to counteract or interfere with the main transaction. As in composition, one principal figure is the leading personage in the piece to which all the others are subordinate, and to whose effect they add; so in narration, one particular action is that which is represented, the effect of which all the minor operations contribute to aid.

This principle is applicable to, and is required to be maintained in descriptions in painting and sculpture, as well as in those in poetry and eloquence, in music and in acting. As regards architecture, and costume, and gardening, the same directions cannot of course be deemed strictly suitable to these arts, for preserving general unity in the designs of which the rules already referred to must suffice.

VIII. A condition of repose is ordinarily regarded as in contrast to one of action, and thus considered is merely negative in its nature. It is, nevertheless, occasionally, although not often, to a certain extent also positive, and of itself actually

affecting to the mind, and productive of results quite independent of the action with which it may be contrasted. At all events it is more positive in its nature than is still life, although by no means so positive or characteristic as vital action. Thus, the quietude or repose of the sea after a storm, of a man after exertion, of armies after a battle, are instances of repose which strike us mainly from their negative quality, their absence of action, their contrast with the previously existing condition of the same subjects. But the repose exhibited by a statue, or a placid lake, is of a positive nature, and owes but little or nothing to any contrast which their anterior condition presents.

Repose is, however, generally advantageous, not only to afford rest to the mind, and to prepare it for acting with vigour, but also to set off by the contrast the more exciting parts of the representation. As the stillness which precedes the outburst of a storm seems to increase its fury, so a pause in any great effort in eloquence adds much to its effect. Silence will thus, on apt occasions, suggest more than the utmost endeavours of eloquence can accomplish.

Repose, too, is, in many respects, and on many occasions, as affecting as action. Our pursuit of art should, moreover, not be confined only to the grand, and striking, and sublime, nor yet to what is exquisitely beautiful and affecting. And we should admire nature as we see her in her tranquil repose, as well as in the moments of her passion, and her terrible emotions.

It must, however, be acknowledged that although repose is in its nature as positive and as real as action, yet as availed of in art, it is mainly efficient when contrasted with action.

Architecture, sculpture, and gardening are, perhaps, alike from their character, and from the material in which they exist, of all the arts most directly and entirely favourable for inculcating ideas and feelings of repose. These arts, indeed, incline us naturally and immediately to inaction, as poetry, and eloquence, and music, and the drama do to action. Costume, too, is more directly and generally adapted for repose than for exertion. Nevertheless, some kinds of costume, such as armour, appear

to be best and peculiarly fitted for action; while other kinds, such as female and indoor dresses, seem best qualified to suggest ideas of repose. But as the first-mentioned of these arts, that of architecture, is, in certain cases, to some extent, although but indirectly fitted for the representation of action, while sculpture, gardening, and costume are more peculiarly adapted to represent repose; so in poetry, and eloquence, and music, and acting, may repose be depicted, and occasionally with great effect in each of them. As an illustration of this, I may mention that Homer, who is so successful in describing action, is no less perfect in his pictures of repose, as in that very admirable one of the night scene at the tent of Diomede, where not only is the mighty hero himself portrayed as deep in slumber with his companions around him, but his spear and shield, and all the active implements of warfare, are also represented as lying inert. Here, indeed, we have not merely the absence of action, but the actual positive presence of repose. The glittering of the armour, which is compared to the lightning of Jove, and the wild bull's hide on which the hero lies, serve, nevertheless, to create ideas associated with the fierceness of his character; while the rich tapestry beneath his head, conduces to mark the dignity of his condition:—

"Without his tent, bold Diomed they found
All sheath'd in arms, his brave companions round:
Each sunk in sleep, extended on the field,
His head reclining on his bossy shield.
A wood of spears stood by, that, fix'd upright,
Shot from their flashing points a quivering light.
A bull's black hide composed the hero's bed;
A splendid carpet roll'd beneath his head."*

IX. Besides the representation of action and of repose as exhibited in nature, there is another condition in which nature may be described when, although animate, she is neither in action, nor yet in repose strictly so called, but in a neutral state which differs from both. This is the description of what is termed in art still life, comprising the representation of objects which are at the same time living and stationary, such as a group of men

* 'Iliad,' book x. lines 150–158.

standing or lying down, cattle grazing at pasture, birds sitting instead of flying. In the case of still life, nature exists as fully and as really as it does in active life, although it is wanting in that motion and energy with which animated objects alone can be endowed.

The representation of still life is easier to effect than is that of action, as a mere transcript is here made from what we see in nature, to the canvas. No extraordinary devices are necessary to be had recourse to, as we observe in the description of action or animation, in order to supply the want of the latter in painting; but nature has only to be imitated just as she is perceived, and on this account these representations in painting and sculpture approach much nearer to nature than do those of action.

Still life, nevertheless, allows not only of the display of much skill as regards the fidelity with which it is represented, but of great variety as to the mode of doing this, and admits of a considerable degree both of grandeur and beauty.

Painting and sculpture are peculiarly adapted to the portrayal of still life, as both life and stillness are especially fitted for representation by these arts. Poetry, although adapted to describe life, is less adapted for stillness than for action. Music is inadapted for stillness, and architecture for actual life of any kind. Acting, although fitted for still life, is, nevertheless, less successful here, and has less scope than where motion is to be represented. And both in costume and gardening there is scarce life enough to characterize a scene of this description. Costume, indeed, represents still life so far as it is substituted for, and is alone visible in the stead of the real form which it covers and hides. In gardening, although the plants which contribute to the composition have life, yet the composition as a whole is destitute of this endowment. Moreover, in art, it is not reality but imitation that is aimed at.

In the representation of landscape scenery, considerable life, and even animation are infused into it by the introduction of men and cattle and birds, or other animals, which serve to communicate to it much of the vitality and activity with which they themselves are endowed. On the other hand, even a real pro-

spect without any animated beings, always appears dull and lifeless. It is, in fact, this entire absence of all living creatures that constitutes a desert, which is nothing more than a lifeless landscape, bereft, indeed, of verdure as well as vitality.

X. In addition, however, to the representation of still life, inanimate nature, and inanimation,—by which I mean a description of real nature as she is seen in the world, although of that part of nature only which is destitute of animation, such as fruit and flowers and trees, and of objects wanting in life, and mountains,—require also to be portrayed. By far the largest portion of nature, indeed, is that which is inanimate, comprehending not only the landscapes of the earth, but the planets of heaven, and including some of the most glorious objects upon which the eye ever rests. Animation, indeed, does not by any means necessarily increase the artistical grandeur or beauty of any subject, although it generally renders it more exciting and affecting. Nature is, however, really and essentially as much nature when inanimate as when animate, although less striking as devoid of vitality, which calls forth our sympathy and excites our feelings more acutely than any inanimate scene could do. Inanimate objects are described just as nature presents them to us; and as animation, more especially in its highest characteristics, such as intellectuality, is that which is the most difficult to represent efficiently in art, so inanimate nature is that which is the easiest to depict. The imitation of objects of this kind by painting, has in some instances been so exact as to be truly astonishing. But the description of inanimate nature by the other arts is in no respect effected with greater facility, and, therefore, with no greater perfection than those representations of a different order already alluded to.

There is sometimes, however, an appearance, a striking character about inanimate objects, which moves us nearly as much as do several representations of the most stirring scenes of life. The rocks and torrents of Salvator Rosa, appeal far more powerfully to the mind, than do the tragic scenes of many modern artists.

Of all the arts, gardening is that which is best adapted for

efforts here, and inanimate nature is peculiarly that of which it is fitted to communicate ideas, although rather by reality than by representation. Painting next to gardening, and sculpture next to painting, is calculated so to be employed. Poetry, eloquence, and music represent it very imperfectly; costume and architecture scarcely do so in a sufficiently direct manner to enable them to attain success here. Acting may effect it, but as this art is mainly directed to higher efforts, it is but seldom for this purpose, and only incidentally, that its aid is sought.

XI. As repose differs from still life in being not merely inaction, but the very counterpart of action; so death differs both from still life and from inanimate nature in being not merely the absence of life, but the actual presence of that which is most opposite to it. This presence of death in artistical representation should, moreover, be as positive as is ever the presence of life. The mere absence of life is inanimation only, such as rivers and clouds and mountains possess; but the presence of death has as strong and decisive and positive features and characteristics of its own, as have either vitality or motion. Life itself, with its activity and elasticity, is in each of the arts the most difficult of all conditions efficiently to represent; while on the other hand, inanimate nature, or nature without life, is the easiest to depict. Even in landscape it is the infusion of an air of vitality, although vitality itself is not there, that is at once the main perplexity and the principal merit. Next to life death is probably that which is the hardest to portray, inasmuch as in actual death there is a positiveness, a distinctness, and a reality, which in mere inanimate nature is not to be found. The presence of death and the mere absence of life are circumstances totally distinct and independent. In the one case it is a corpse upon which we look; in the other, it is a mere mass of senseless matter which never possessed vitality. Whoever enters the dark and noiseless chambers of death, as he steals along silently and awe-stricken, must fain acknowledge that although void of actual excitement, this is of all scenes the most appalling. The vacant stare which meets our eye, is far more impressive than the most piercing gaze. The solemn stillness which here prevails, sinks deeper into the

soul than the most thrilling sounds. Its utter silence appals us more than any voice by which we could be accosted. So far, indeed, from death not being a positive reality, it is, in truth, of all realities the most vivid, the most exciting, and that which comes home the nearest to our souls.

It consequently follows that almost, if not quite as much expression and vigour, alike in feeling and character, are developed by death, as by the most active life, although the mode in which the manifestation is made, and the peculiar features delineated, will in each case, of course, be very different. And the whole form and attitude and expression of the body, as well as of the countenance, and the tone of colour as well as the outline of the figure, will each here perform their part in the solemn pageant.

The description therefore of death, whether in painting, sculpture, poetry, or eloquence,—of animation fled away, of past pain and suffering, of the faded eye, the hollow cheek, the pallid face, the sunken jaw, the drooping head and limbs, the shrunk and emaciated form,—may be as striking as the strongest exhibition of present feeling and intense action. Although the object is perfectly still, its effect on the mind is most exciting.

The figure of Christ in Rubens's noble painting of 'The Descent of the Cross,' is a very fine and striking representation of death; and every member here, as well as the inanimate body curved and shrunk up into an unnatural attitude, seems to proclaim the departure of life. Each muscle is shown to be listless, each limb torpid. The drooping head, the dimmed eyes, the fallen jaw, the inanimate countenance, the stiffened form,—all alike proclaim the presence of death, in language as positive and effective as any which might have been resorted to to represent life by the exhibition of the most vigorous and energetic action.

The most perfect representation of death, in all its reality, is, however, afforded by Raphael's very beautiful picture of 'The Entombment of Christ,' in the Borghese gallery at Rome. The exhibition of inanity and inertness and stiffness in the whole frame, and particularly in the limbs of the dead Christ,

is very perfectly accomplished, and serves well to depict the presence of death; the effect of which is powerfully aided by the livid hue of the flesh, more especially as contrasted with the appearance of the persons who are carrying the body.

Death in another form, as witnessed in children, is very pathetically and perfectly represented in Guido's 'Massacre of the Innocents,' which is in the collection of the Academy of Arts at Bologna. Of two children who have been slain, one is depicted as placidly reclining, with a sweet smile upon its face; another is lying peaceably by it, just as it fell from the assassin's gripe. In both of them the presence and the expression of death, its tranquillity and stillness and listnessness, are exquisitely portrayed.

One of the most effective and striking, and indeed harrowing representations of death is Holbein's 'Dead Christ,' which is in the gallery of the museum at Basle. The form is stiff and shrunk, and the flesh is livid. The expression of past suffering is very ghastly, but most forcible. The relief too, and the resemblance to nature, are very powerfully effected.

Representations of a revolting, or directly unpleasing description should, nevertheless, be ever avoided, whatever is the quality of the subject treated; as however such exhibitions may be true to nature and appropriate to the subject, they are unfit to be attempted by art, the end of which is always at least elevating and refining, if not directly pleasurable, and appeals to our faculties and to the higher parts of our being; whereas the result of compositions of this revolting kind is degrading and degenerating, and serves to excite only our lower impulses, and to create disgust. Thus, the terrible but not the horrible, is fit to be represented in art; and scenes appalling and exciting, but never those which are loathsome and offensive. Upon the same principle also, the sensual and immoral and profane are ever to be excluded from the exalted and pure regions of art, whether in painting, sculpture, eloquence, music, or the drama.

In certain early compositions in painting and sculpture, before the principles of art were clearly defined or fully understood, this rule was occasionally transgressed. But even de-

formity and distortion, although found in nature, have no place in art, and are never to be admitted there except in very extraordinary emergencies. Indeed, art should correct and refine even nature herself. In nature, these defects have no legitimate station, only enter as intruders, and are not recognized as belonging to her system. So far has this principle been carried by the most celebrated artists, that our great sculptor Flaxman remarks that, "in the face of the dying Achilles and Laocoon, pain and death produce nothing like distortion; the elevation of noble minds is seen in their sufferings."*

Although the terrible may always be described as effectively as the power of the artist will admit, yet the disgusting should never be directly represented. The former, while it awes and even distresses us, excites, nevertheless, some measure of gratification along with this feeling, which, as before observed, is an essential part of art; while the result of the latter is wholly contrary to any sensation of this kind. On this account, great skill and care are requisite in the introduction of not only death and disease, but violent passion, in artistical representation. In any case, death, however hideous, should not be revolting; although it appal, it should never nauseate us. The efforts of art, though sometimes painfully exciting, ought never to be repulsive.

In that most powerful and indeed wonderful composition by Raphael, contained in our own National Gallery, representing 'The Murder of the Innocents,' the agony and terror depicted are too excessive, too true to nature, to suffer the mind to dwell long upon the subject. The whole soul becomes subdued by the emotions of anguish and pity which seem to creep into it, and with which the picture as it were infects it. But with all this, there is nothing in the composition that is directly offensive or revolting.

Death should be, therefore, as moving and affecting in the representation as is life. Thorwaldsen's monument of the 'Dead Lion,' at Lucerne, is as stirring and exciting as an exhibition of death, as many of the most animated descriptions of vitality and action and passion.

* Lect. v. p. 134.

But still more difficult than the representation even of death, is the forcible and adequate depicting of the action of dying, which is the active of the former condition, while death is but the passive. Indeed, dying has all the reality and all the positiveness of death, with action superadded. An effective example of the representation of dying in painting, is afforded by Raphael's cartoon of 'The Death of Ananias,' in whose countenance the expression of life passing away, the relaxing features, and fading eye, and drooping form, are very powerfully portrayed.

A powerful representation of this kind has been effected in sculpture, in the celebrated statue of 'The Dying Gladiator;' as also in 'The Mask of Alexander the Great,' which represents the hero in the very act of expiring. The expression of intense suffering, and of the paralysed features and frame, excite emotions as vivid as any descriptions of the most animated scenes could afford. In both these works, the design is effective and full of feeling, without being ghastly or repulsive. Canova's statue of 'The Dying Magdalene,' is another striking example of an effort of this nature in sculpture. The repose of the figure, and the exhibition of languor and exhaustion, which mainly contribute to evince her condition, are very fine and moving, and forcible, because true to nature. In sculpture, indeed, the representation both of death and of dying is more difficult to attain perfectly than it is in painting, because colour, which is here so powerful an auxiliary, is wholly wanting.

Architecture, costume, and gardening, may be said successfully to represent death, so far as they contribute to supply apt emblems of mortality, furnish receptacles for the dead, or afford tokens of mourning for them. In this respect, however, they are suggestive, rather than descriptive or imitative. Acting is one of the most efficient of all the arts in the representation of death, and some of its greatest feats have been accomplished here.

Difficult, however, as is the due representation of death, and of dying still more so, as our experience of it is less; that of returning to life, for the same reason, must necessarily be more

difficult still. This has nevertheless been wonderfully and effectively achieved in certain performances by some great masters, as in 'The Raising of Lazarus,' by Rembrandt, where the gradual reappearance of animation invigorating the frame, and quickening the lately dormant powers, are depicted with surprising force, and with true fidelity to nature. All this is accomplished more perfectly still in Michael Angelo's magnificent representation of 'The Last Judgment.'

Many subjects of a repulsive nature may be properly described in poetry, which are not at all fitted for pictorial representation; inasmuch as while the general idea of them conveyed by poetry is but indistinct and feeble, the exact and particular minute exhibition of them afforded by painting, disgusts and nauseates. This is especially true as regards efforts where violent death, and disease, and deformity are aimed at, which in the reality are absolutely offensive, and which when they are made to appear real, necessarily retain a portion of their disagreeable effect, in proportion as they are true to nature; but which they to a great extent lose by being viewed through the medium of an art, such as poetry, which so changes or modifies them as to relieve them from this condition; as in the description by Homer of the mangled body of Hector dragged at the chariot of Achilles, which, although in poetry it is not directly revolting, would be in a painting if portrayed with fidelity.

In poetry, however, there may be incidents so disgusting in their very nature as to be wholly unfitted to be related, which no effort of art can render decorous, and which it is unnecessary to specify. If we may presume without profanity to censure so sublime a poet, even Homer appears to be sometimes open to criticism on account of the revolting and nauseous details which he occasionally introduces into his battles, describing the minute particulars of the mode in which certain of his heroes were slain; incidents, moreover, which in the heat and turmoil of the fight would pass unobserved. This is more particularly the case in book xi. of the 'Iliad,' where the lopping off the hands of the brother of Pisander, and the bloody trail from his head are described; in the account of the bursting

of the eyeball of young Ilioneus, at the close of book xv.; in the dashing out the brains, mingled with gore, of Demoleon, book xx.; and in the piercing the liver of Alastor, in the same book. Virgil's description of the death of Priam,* much as it has been praised by some critics, appears to be faulty in the same way as those of Homer. It is too much of a mere butchery, unrelieved by either beauty or pathos, to call forth any emotions except those of pain and loathing.

The same observations apply to eloquence as well as to poetry. The description of the dead ass, by Sterne, though true to nature in all respects, presents nothing which can offend the senses, or nauseate the feelings. In music, sounds of great variety are produced and imitated, but never those of a directly harsh or revolting kind.

XII. We must now advert to some of the leading examples afforded in illustration of each of the foregoing principles together and in the aggregate, by the different arts, in addition to those already cited in the previous sections, as also in the other chapters of the present work.

The arts as regards their different operations so far as they have been treated of in this chapter, appear to divide themselves into those which are descriptive, those which are narrative, and those which are suggestive only. They may be further divided into those which describe or narrate active scenes, those which describe or represent scenes which are passive, and those which describe or represent scenes of a mixed character. As regards this latter division, poetry, eloquence, and music, appear mainly to be comprehended under the first class; architecture, costume, and gardening, under the second; and painting, sculpture, and acting, under the third.

We have an excellent, and indeed perfect illustration of the principles both of composition, and also of narration and description, in the picture by Poussin, in the Bridgewater gallery, of 'Moses Striking the Rock.'* The principal person in the scene, who is of dignified office and character, and who is deemed worthy of being the immediate agent of Providence in this great work, is marked out as of superior aspect and de-

* 'Æneid,' lib. ii. lines 547–558.

meanour to the rest; he is endowed with a considerable degree of grandeur in his appearance, and at once strikes the eye as the leading figure in the picture. To add to the effect of this particular individual, most of the others are turned towards him, and serve to point him out as the chief object in the group. The artist has also enhanced the dignity of the above personage, by placing him rather on an eminence, as is also done in the figure of St. Paul, in the cartoon which represents him 'Preaching at Athens.' The attitude of Moses here, who is in the act of striking the rock, at once and alone serves to denote what particular individual he is intended to represent.

The subordinate characters in the picture are described in different postures, and as engaged in various actions. None of them possess that dignity with which the principal figure is endowed, but they all contribute, by their attitude and demeanour, admirably to narrate the history of the event there depicted. The fading eye, the shrunk form, the haggard and deathlike expressions of some, show the agony they had endured; while the postures of repose in which they are reclining, denote the feeble and exhausted, and, indeed, almost dying condition to which they had become reduced. The rapturous eagerness with which others rush to taste the water, serves to tell us that the want of that has been the cause of their suffering, and that its appearance was sudden and unlooked for. The amazement and awe depicted on their countenances evince that the event was deemed miraculous; and the adoration of others, that they knew they were indebted to Providence for their deliverance.

The remaining parts of the picture are all made to assist in the narration, and nothing which is introduced destroys the unity in action of the entire representation. The background, or landscape, exhibits a dreary desert. As a whole, this picture relates in language the most affecting and powerful, the wonderful event of which it is the subject.

In poetic description and narration, we may observe how gradually we are led on to the transaction; every attendant circumstance which could give effect to the subject is intro-

duced, and the different objects are minutely described. In the following account by Virgil, who was one of the greatest masters in this art, of the "Death of Laocoon,"* we cannot but be struck by the vigour and the power with which the whole scene is portrayed. The ocean, the first appearance motion and colour of the serpents, the actions and feelings both of Laocoon and of his sons, are forcibly described, and the vigour of the narration is greatly heightened by apt comparisons. On the other hand, in the representation by sculpture of this event, only a very limited portion of the narration detailed by the poet is attempted, and the figures of Laocoon and his sons entwined by the serpents, are all that are introduced into the scene. Yet the description in sculpture strikes our minds as effectively, if not more powerfully than the narration of the poet, inasmuch as it appeals more directly to the senses, instead of to the imagination and the judgment. We seem to behold the agonizing forms, and the writhing serpents, really present before us.

The narration by Virgil is as follows:—

"Laocoon, ductus Neptuno sorte sacerdos,
Solemnes taurum ingentem mactabat ad aras.
Ecce autem gemini a Tenedo tranquilla per alta,—
Horresco referens,—immensis orbibus angues
Incumbunt pelago, pariterque ad litora tendunt;
Pectora quorum inter fluctus arrecta, jubæque
Sanguineæ superant undas, pars cetera pontum
Pone legit, sinuatque immensa volumine terga.
Fit sonitus spumante salo; jamque arva tenebant,
Ardentesque oculos suffecti sanguine et igni
Sibila lambebant linguis vibrantibus ora.
Diffugimus visu exsangues; illi agmine certo
Laocoonta petunt, et primum parva duorum
Corpora natorum serpens amplexus uterque
Implicat, et miseros morsu depascitur artus;
Post ipsum auxilio subeuntem ac tela ferentem
Corripiunt, spirisque ligant ingentibus, et jam
Bis medium amplexi, bis collo squamea circum
Terga dati, superant capite et cervicibus altis.

* 'Æneid,' lib. ii. lines 201–227.

Ille simul manibus tendit divellere nodos,
Perfusus sanie vittas atroque veneno,
Clamores simul horrendos ad sidera tollit,
Quales mugitus, fugit cum saucius aram
Taurus et incertam excussit cervice securim.
At gemini lapsu delubra ad summa dracones
Effugiunt sævæque petunt Tritonidis arcem,
Sub pedibusque deæ clipeique sub orbe teguntur."*

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* The above passage has been translated by Dryden into English verse, in the following terms:—

"Laocoon, Neptune's priest by lot that year,
With solemn pomp then sacrificed a steer;
When (dreadful to behold) from sea we spied
Two serpents, rank'd abreast, the seas divide,
And smoothly sweep the swelling tide.
Their flaming crests above the waves they show:
Their bellies seem to burn the seas below:
Their speckled tails advance to steer their course,
And on the sounding shore the flying billows force.
And now the strand, and now the plain, they held,
Their ardent eyes with bloody streaks were fill'd;
Their nimble tongues they brandish'd as they came,
And lick'd their hissing jaws, that sputter'd flame.
We fled amazed; their destined way they take,
And to Laocoon and his children make:
And first around the tender boys they wind,
Then with their sharpen'd fangs their limbs and bodies grind,
The wretched father, running to their aid,
With pious haste, but vain, they next invade:
Twice round his waist their winding volumes roll'd;
And thrice around his gasping throat they fold.
The priest thus doubly choked—their crests divide,
And tow'ring o'er his head in triumph ride.
With both his hands he labours at the knots;
His holy fillets the blue venom blots;
His roaring fills the flitting air around.
Thus, when an ox receives a glancing wound,
He breaks his bands, the fatal altar flies,
And with loud bellowings breaks the yielding skies.
Their tasks perform'd, the serpents quit their prey,
And to the tow'r of Pallas make their way:
Couch'd at her feet, they lie protected there,
By her large buckler, and protended spear."

In Virgil's account of a storm at sea,* the whole scene is described, not only with great force and effect, but with considerable animation and activity also. And not merely are ideas of various apt inanimate objects brought together, but life and motion are also introduced, and add extensively to the power and spirit of the narration. First of all, we have the winds rushing together and raising the waves,—

> "Una Eurusque Notusque ruunt, creberque procellis
> Africus, et vastos volvunt ad litora fluctus."†

This is followed by a description of the result produced by this excitement, in the cry of the seamen, and the cracking of the cables:—

> "Insequitur clamorque virûm stridorque rudentum."

The scene is next heightened through the sudden overspread of the heavens by clouds, and the gloomy approach of night, together with the terrors produced by the lightning, which threatens immediate destruction to the trembling mariners:—

> "Eripiunt subito nubes cælumque, diemque
> Teucrorum ex oculis; ponto nox incubat atra;
> Intonuere poli, et crebris micat ignibus æther;
> Præsentemque viris intentant omnia mortem."‡

The excitement of Æneas, in particular, serves to evince the

* 'Æneid,' lib. i. lines 84–94, 102–123.

† "South, east, and west, with mix'd confusion roar,
And roll the foaming billows to the shore."
Dryden's 'Virgil.'

‡ "The cables crack, the sailors' fearful cries
Ascend; and sable night involves the skies;
And heav'n itself is ravish'd from their eyes.
Loud peals of thunder from the poles ensue;
Then flashing fires the transient light renew;
The face of things a frightful image bears;
And present death in various forms appears."
Dryden's 'Virgil.'

alarming nature of the event, as do the sentiments to which, in his terror, he gives utterance:—

"Extemplo Æneæ solvuntur frigore membra;
Ingemit et, duplices tendens ad sidera palmas,
Talia voce refert: O terque quaterque beati,
Quîs ante ora patrum, Trojæ sub manibus altis,
Contigit oppetere! O Danaum fortissime gentis
Tydide, mene Iliacis occumbere campis
Non potuisse, tuâque animam hanc effundere dextrâ!
Sævus ubi Æacidæ telo jacet Hector, ubi ingens
Sarpedon, ubi tot Simois correpta sub undis
Scuta virûm, galeasque, et fortia corpora volvit?"*

The poet subsequently proceeds to a description of the raging of the storm, and instances all the attendant leading circumstances which contribute to mark its intensity and its power; and he relates the devastation which it occasions:—

"Talia jactanti stridens Aquilone procella
Velum adversa ferit, fluctusque ad sidera tollit.
Franguntur remi; tum prora avertit, et undis
Dat latus, insequitur cumulo præruptus aquæ mons.
Hi summo in fluctu pendent, his unda dehiscens
Terram inter fluctus aperit, furit æstus arenis.
Tres Notus abreptas in saxa latentia torquet;
Saxa vocant Itali, mediis quæ in fluctibus, Aras:
Dorsum immane mari summo; tres Eurus ab alto
In brevia et syrtes urget; miserabile visu;
Illidit vadis, atque aggere cingit arenæ.
Unam, quæ Lycios fidumque vehebat Oronten,

---

* "Struck with unusual fright, the Trojan chief,
With lifted hands and eyes, invokes relief;
And 'thrice and four times happy those,' he cried,
'That under Ilian walls, before their parents, died!'
Tydides, bravest of the Grecian train!
Why could not I by that strong arm be slain,
And lie by noble Hector on the plain,
Or great Sarpedon, in those bloody fields,
Where Simois rolls the bodies and the shields
Of heroes, whose dismember'd hands yet bear
The dart aloft, and clench the pointed spear?"

Dryden's 'Virgil.'

Ipsius ante oculos ingens a vertice pontus
In puppim ferit, excutitur, pronusque magister
Volvitur in caput, ast illam ter fluctus ibidem
Torquet agens circum, et rapidus vorat æquore vortex."*

The description concludes by informing us that all the appearances are at length exhibited, of the vessel being overwhelmed by the storm, and yielding to its fury:—

"Vicit hyems; laxis laterum compagibus omnes
Accipiunt inimicum imbrem, rimisque fatiscunt."†

It is hardly possible for any narration of this sort to be more striking or more complete. Nothing seems to be omitted

* "Thus while the pious prince his fate bewails,
Fierce Boreas drove against his flying sails,
And rent the sheets: the raging billows rise,
And mount the tossing vessel to the skies:
Nor can the shiv'ring oars sustain the blow;
The galley gives her side, and turns her prow;
While those astern, descending down the steep,
Through gaping waves behold the boiling deep.
Three ships were buried by the southern blast,
And on the secret shelves with fury cast.
Those hidden rocks the Ausonian sailors knew:
They call'd them altars, when they rose in view,
And show'd their spacious backs above the flood,
Three more fierce Eurus, in his angry mood,
Dash'd on the shallows of the moving sand,
And in mid ocean left them moor'd a-land.
Orontes' bark, that bore the Lycian crew,
(A horrid sight) ev'n in the hero's view,
From stem to stern by waves was overborne:
The trembling pilot, from his rudder torn,
Was headlong hurl'd: thrice round the ship was toss'd
Then bulged at once, and in the deep was lost."

Dryden's 'Virgil.'

† "The stoutest vessel to the storm gave way,
And suck'd through loosen'd planks the rushing sea.
Ilioneus was her chief: Aletes old,
Achates faithful, Abas young and bold,
Endured not less: their ships with gaping seams,
Admit the deluge of the briny streams."

Dryden's 'Virgil.'

which could serve to give effect to the description, while there is nothing that is either misplaced or superfluous. What is also of great importance, the representation is in no part overdone, but is everywhere, and throughout, true to nature, which is, perhaps, the real secret of its efficiency, and of its affecting to our minds with such great force.

In Homer's description of a hunted lion,* a few well-directed master-strokes alone amply suffice to afford a very vigorous and effective representation of the whole scene:—

> "So midst the dogs and hunters' daring bands,
> Fierce of his might, a boar or lion stands;
> Arm'd foes around a dreadful circle form,
> And hissing javelins rain an iron storm:
> His powers untamed their bold assault defy,
> And where he turns, the rout disperse, or die:
> He foams, he glares, he bounds against them all,
> And if he falls, his courage makes him fall."

We have here, first, a simple description of the actors in the scene; and next, an account of the actions they performed, and the qualities they exhibited. The lion is represented as surrounded by dogs and huntsmen, glaring fiercely at them, and never flinching, or showing any signs of alarm, but occasionally turning round and attacking and even repelling them, although eventually his courage proves his death. The huntsmen are described as drawing themselves up into a square form, standing against him, and ceaselessly hurling javelins at their foe, though their ranks are sometimes broken by his fury. The qualities of strength, courage, and nobleness of heart are attributed to the lion. These few leading descriptive elements judiciously, aptly, and effectively combined, added to our already conceived ideas or notions of a lion, and of what must occur in such a scene, serve, in the hand of a master, to effect one of the most forcible and striking representations that poetry has ever achieved.

Another very noble description of a lion hunt is contained in the following passage by Homer.† A whole village is arrayed

* 'Iliad,' book xii. lines 41–43; Pope's translation.

† *Ibid.* book xx. lines 164–177; Pope's translation.

against the valiant beast, but he at first despises them all; until, being aroused by a wound, he collects himself for a spring, his teeth meanwhile gnashing, his mouth foaming, his eyes glaring, his sides being lashed fiercely by his tail, when, groaning with fury, he rushes dauntless on his foes. To him Achilles is compared when he goes forth to attack Æneas; and much vigour is doubtless infused into the account of the hero, by comparing him with the noble animal in question, whose magnanimous qualities cannot but excite the sublimest emotions in the mind:—

"Such the lion's rage,
Who viewing first his foes with scornful eyes,
Though all in arms the peopled city rise,
Stalks careless on, with unregarding pride;
Till at the length by some brave youth defied,
To his bold spear the savage turns alone,
He murmurs fury with a hollow groan;
He grins, he foams, he rolls his eyes around;
Lash'd by his tail, his heaving sides resound;
He calls up all his rage; he grinds his teeth,
Resolved on vengeance, or resolved on death.
So fierce Achilles on Æneas flies;
So stands Æneas, and his force defies."

In Chaucer, too, the description is equally particular, and the leading characteristic traits are selected and depicted with the same force and effect. Take, for instance, his representation of the Miller,* which seems almost to present before us the very portrait of the man, as well as to narrate his action and his manner:—

"The Miller was a stout carle for the nones,
Ful bigge he was of braun, and eke of bones;
That proved wel, for over all ther he came,
At wrastlyng he wold bere away the ram,
He was short shuldered brode, a thikke gnarre,
Ther n'as no dore, that he n'olde heve of barre,
Or breke it at a renning with his hede.
His berd as any sowe or fox was rede,
And therto brode, as though it were a spade.
Upon the cop right of his nose he hade

* 'Canterbury Tales,' Prologue.

A werte, and theron stode a tufte of heres,
Rede as the bristles of a sowes eres.
His nose-thirles blacke were and wide.
A swerd and bokeler bare he by his side,
His mouth as wide was as a forneis.
. . . . . .
A white cote and a blew hode wered he
A baggepipe wel coude he blowe and soune,
And therwithal he brought us out of toune."

The same observations will apply to Chaucer's description of the Reve:—*

"The Reve was a slendre colerike man,
His berd was shave as neighe as ever he can.
His here was by his eres round yshorne.
His top was docked like a preeste beforne.
Ful longe were his legges, and ful lene,
Ylike a staffe, ther was no calf ysene."

A forcible illustration of the correctness of the principles contained in the present chapter, is also afforded by the following description by Spenser of the "Cave of Despair,"† which is, perhaps, his masterpiece in this style; in which will be observed the mode in which action of different kinds is portrayed, together with the representation of death, and the various images and metaphors that are introduced in order to heighten and give effect to the scene:—

"Ere long they come, where that same wicked wight
His dwelling has, low in an hollow cave,
Far underneath a craggy cliff ypight,
Darke, dolefull, dreary, like a greedy grave,
That still for carrion carcases doth crave:
On top whereof ay dwelt the ghastly owle,
Shrieking his balefull note, which ever drave
Far from that haunt all other chearefull fowle;
And all about it wandring ghostes did wayle and howle.

"And all about old stockes and stubs of trees,
Whereon nor fruit nor leafe was ever seen,
Did hang upon the ragged rocky knees;
On which had many wretches hanged beene,

* 'Canterbury Tales,' Prologue.
† 'Faerie Queene,' book i. chap. 9, verses 33, 36.

Whose carcases were scattred on the greene,
And throwne about the cliffs.
. . . . . .

"That darkesome cave they enter, where they find
That cursed man, low sitting on the ground,
Musing full sadly in his sullein mind:
His griesie lockes, long growen and unbound,
Disordred hong about his shoulders round,
And hid his face; through which his hollow eyne
Lookt deadly dull, and stared as astound;
His raw-bone cheekes, through penurie and pine,
Were shronke into his iawes, as he did never dine.

"His garment, nought but many ragged clouts,
With thornes together pind and patchet was,
The which his naked sides he wrapt about:
And him beside there lay upon the gras
A dreary corse, whose life away did pas,
All wallow'd in his own yet luke-warme blood,
That from his wound yet welled fresh, alas!
In which a rusty knife fast fixed stood,
And made an open passage for the gushing flood."

It is not often that we see motion successfully represented in sculpture; but this is not so much owing to the direct inaptation of the art for this purpose, as to the want of skill in the particular artist. Statuary is in reality not more motionless than painting. A picture is as inanimate and as still as a statue. The efficiency, therefore, with which a work in sculpture imitates action, depends entirely on the peculiar degree of dexterity possessed by the person who applies the materials for this purpose. There are instances of moving figures being as correctly represented in sculpture as in painting, for examples of which we may appeal to the group of 'The Laocoon,' but above all to those most perfect specimens of art in this branch, the Elgin Marbles. The appropriate and various attitudes of different living figures, and the position of the drapery in which they are clothed, are the most efficient elements to depict motion in sculpture. The latter is peculiarly available for this purpose; and, indeed, in nature, we judge of the motion of drapery more by the figure that it assumes than by actually seeing it move. Action of different kinds, repose, and death,—indeed,

description and narration generally,—are as fully portrayed and effected by sculpture as by painting.

In compositions and descriptions, both in poetry and eloquence, great skill is evinced by seizing upon those ideas which strike the mind most forcibly, and by vividly exciting them by means of the narration. The extraordinary success of Spenser in this respect, I have already adverted to in the previous chapter, and the examples there given may suffice for illustration here. In this department, Homer very highly excels, alike as regards the vigour with which his delineations are effected, and the accordance with nature which they ever maintain. And he also possessed, to a high degree, the art of giving life and animation to the different characters that he introduces. This appears also to have been the great forte of Sterne, as we may perceive in the following sketch of 'The Captive,' which serves admirably to illustrate my theory, and where the ideas of the ghastly form, the pining features, and the haggard looks of the wretched being, together with the various melancholy objects about him, are called forth in a very striking manner. Here also vital action is represented, as well as its opposite, repose; and the ideas of what is past and prospective are also excited. Death in the approach is moreover shadowed.

"I took a single captive; and having first shut him up in his dungeon, I then look'd through the twilight of his grated door to take his picture.

"I beheld his body half wasted away with long expectation and confinement, and felt what kind of sickness of the heart it was which arises from hope deferred. Upon looking nearer, I saw him pale and feverish, in thirty years the western breeze had not once fanned his blood;—he had seen no sun, no moon, in all that time;—nor had the voice of friend or kinsman breathed through his lattice!

"His children—

"But here my heart began to bleed;—I was forced to go on with another part of the portrait.

"He was sitting upon the ground upon a little straw, in the furthest corner of his dungeon, which was alternately his chair and bed: a little calendar of small sticks were laid at the head,

notched all over with the dismal days and nights he had passed there;—he had one of these little sticks in his hand, and with a rusty nail he was etching another day of misery to add to the heap. As I darkened the little light he had, he lifted up a hopeless eye towards the door, then cast it down—shook his head, and went on with his work of affliction. I heard his chains upon his legs, as he turned his body to lay his little stick upon the bundle.—He gave a deep sigh.—I saw the iron enter into his soul!"*

Music is, as has been observed, peculiarly adapted for description and narration: indeed, so obviously is this the case, that it is unnecessary here to point out its entire suitableness for these important purposes, or the application to this art of the foregoing principles. It is eminently fitted also for the representation of action, especially of the most exciting kind, such as tempests and battle-pieces. Handel's oratorio of 'Israel in Egypt' affords ample illustration here.

In dramatic acting the narration is effected, as in poetry eloquence and music, by the actual motion of the agents engaged in the description; so that it is these operations in reality, instead of the representation of them, that we witness. Each of the principles already enumerated in the foregoing sections, may be advantageously applied more or less here.

In costume, although literal description or narration may not be attained, yet by the ideal, or rather emblematical representation which it presents, many ideas may be forcibly called forth or suggested to the mind; as some costumes are, as already observed, peculiarly fitted for action, such as martial costume; others for quietude or repose; and some, such as mourning costumes, are emblematical of death. Another important consideration in the case of costume, is the freedom that it allows to the natural motion of the limbs, and other pliable parts of the body, the regulation of which may be said to correspond in this art with the principle of action in painting and sculpture.

Gardening appears in every way fitted rather for the representation of inaction than action. But even here, as regards

* 'Sentimental Journey.'

the scenes it is capable of typifying or suggesting, especially those of quietude and repose, many of the foregoing principles may be rendered applicable. Indeed, with respect to the varying prospects which a composition in landscape-gardening displays, the exhibition of them may be deemed somewhat analogous to the description and narration of successive scenes by certain of the other arts. On the whole, however, it is obvious, as already remarked, that in architecture costume and gardening, the narration and action can only be symbolical instead of real. These arts reflect merely, in the place of directly representing the transaction or idea to be portrayed. Thus, the Tower of London may be regarded as symbolically descriptive and narrative of the many tragic and historical events which it has witnessed, and of the various remarkable actions that have been performed within its walls; as is also the case with many of our noble cathedrals and castles, renowned alike in the page of history, and for the splendour of their structure. The several suits of antique armour and costume contained in our different feudal edifices bring back to our recollection events and actions during the period of their use. In a corresponding manner, too, the gardens and grounds of our ancient palaces, serve to recall to our minds the various memorable occurrences which are inseparably associated with their history. In this respect, their language, like that of pictures, although mute, is both eloquent and universal.

CHAPTER XI.

CHARACTER AND EMOTION IN ARTISTICAL REPRESENTATION.

I. As the study of human nature is one of the noblest and one of the most important themes upon which the mind can be engaged, so whatever tends to aid us in this exalted undertaking must necessarily be deemed worthy of our attention and our regard. Various as are the pursuits which are resorted to for this purpose, there is none by which human nature is represented more comprehensively and more completely than it is by art, through the medium of which, as upon the surface of a mirror, its entire form is reflected, and the lineament of each feature is faithfully and powerfully portrayed. And it is to the adaptation of art to depict human nature thus fully and fairly, that it owes its high rank among those sublime studies which contribute at once to expand and to invigorate the mind. Hence the representation of nature, but above all, of human nature, is the noblest prerogative of art; and that prerogative is mainly exercised in the exhibition that it affords of the characters which distinguish, and the passions which agitate different persons. An inquiry into a subject of this high interest must, therefore, necessarily constitute one of the most important of those selected for discussion in the present work.

In the arts of painting, sculpture, poetry, and eloquence, the appropriate and vigorous expression of the characters and feelings of the individuals who are introduced into a composition, has ever been acknowledged to be a matter of the very highest importance, and of the deepest interest. Indeed, on the effective attainment of this purpose, the power and excellence of

the whole work must be mainly dependent. In the other arts, however, it is also possible to infuse into their compositions a certain individuality both of character and feeling, in a particular way, as also to represent nature generally, if not human nature, in all its varied features. Music, indeed, equally admits of this with painting and poetry. Architecture, although in another mode, is also susceptible of it. Acting is peculiarly adapted for this purpose. And by costume and gardening it is as fully, although in a different manner effected.

Every character and every passion has its distinct and appropriate expression in nature, which art too has the power to exhibit. The varieties of the countenance are but as so many notes which a skilful musician may bring out, correspondent with the endowments and emotions of the mind. The face, indeed, is as it were the telegraph, or instrument for expressing the silent language of the soul. Its manifestations should not only be correct as a transcript of the feelings which cause them, but suitable to their own particular kind. Perhaps, indeed, to a certain extent violent passion destroys individuality of intellectual or moral character, in so far as all men resemble one another when excited in the same degree. The exhibition of character and emotion varies, however, not only as regards its intenseness, but as regards its quality.

The aim, therefore, of a great painter or sculptor will be not only to represent the outward form and countenance of the man, but by such representation to afford an idea of his inward character and constitution. The outward delineation with him is not an end but a means. His success in the latter is tested only by his attainment of the former; he portrays in reality not so much the body as the soul.

But in order to paint mankind properly, we must understand human nature thoroughly. As a knowledge of anatomy is requisite to enable us to delineate the figure correctly; so a knowledge of the working and operation of the soul is requisite to enable any one to describe character and passion with truth and animation. To capacitate us to touch the chord skilfully, we must be well acquainted with the instrument upon which we intend to perform.

To move the passions effectively, it is therefore essential that the representation be true to nature. At no time, indeed, has nature so entirely her full and free sway, as when a man is excited by passion. The shackles of society are at least then thrown off, and the bonds of formal etiquette burst asunder.

This important branch of art is, consequently, one which has ever met with the fullest consideration from all those who in each department have attained the highest rank. Raphael, who, among painters, stands pre-eminent, as regards the high and intellectual nature of his performances, is as I have already observed, particularly remarkable for the great attention which he paid to this subject. In poetry, Shakspeare, so justly styled the poet of nature, is also principally to be noted for his extraordinary skill in the apt delineation of the character and passions of the persons he describes.

On the other hand, it must be admitted that one great defect in the works of many modern artists is the want, in fact the entire absence of all individuality and particularity in the character of the leading persons represented, sufficient to denote with any certainty the especial being intended to be portrayed.

It is remarkable, indeed, that while so much time and attention and study have been devoted to the anatomy of the limbs and figure, and the attitudes which they assume; so little pains should have been taken to observe and to delineate correctly the anatomy of the face, and the variety of character and expression manifested through the features, in which the quality and operations of the soul itself are reflected, and the portrayal of which is the noblest and highest attainment by far which can be reached by art.

One circumstance which has perhaps led people to suppose that the ancient masters in painting, in the development through their countenances of the character and feelings of the persons represented by them, were more ideal than those of the present day, and copied less from nature without selection or discrimination, is, that from their living in a country different to our own, the features of the persons delineated vary extensively in

their general expression from those we every day see, although probably quite of the same cast with those which they were in the ordinary habit of beholding. This is especially the case with Raphael and with Rembrandt; and it is also applicable to the sculptors of ancient Greece.

A character may, indeed, be either real or ideal. A real character is such as actually existed in nature, in some individual man. An ideal character is such as never existed in nature, but is supposed to belong to some imaginary human being. Or an ideal character may be to a certain extent real, as containing a general representation of human nature at large. This combination of the real and the ideal is the highest effort of art. Human nature is here not only described truly, but is in many instances exalted, and indeed perfected.

In the delineation of character, especially in epic composition, while the ideal should derive life and nature from the real, the real should in turn derive dignity and sublimity from the ideal.

II. If, therefore, the due and adequate representation of human nature is of such important consequence in art, we have next to inquire into the mode by which this grand object can be efficiently attained. This can be accomplished only by the apt delineation of the characters and feelings of the various personages introduced into compositions of this kind, which may be effected by two principal methods. The first of these, which is practicable in painting, sculpture, poetry, and eloquence, is by a direct representation or description of the appearance of the individuals alluded to, and the exhibition of the peculiar aspect or demeanour which they present.

It is to be borne in mind that the character and feelings of the different persons to be represented must not only be such as are strictly proper to them, but such as will be efficient to supply the want of speech and of animation. The language of the countenance, if it may be so termed, when closely examined is as complete and as powerful as is that of the lips; both alike are the reflection of the action of the soul. The sculptured form of the dying gladiator expresses all that the

tongue of the real man could do; in some respects, indeed, suggesting far more than any words could accomplish. In such a representation by art, while vigour is requisite to the efficiency of the design, exaggeration at once destroys its effect, and banishes nature from the composition. The delineation of the countenance should not only display the correct working of the features, but reflect the operation of the soul. According as it effects this end, is the representation perfect.

Almost as much expression is however sometimes displayed by the attitude of the figure, as by the conformation of the features, although that conveyed by the latter mode is perhaps of a higher and more intellectual kind than the former. Whether the face or the figure is that through which mainly the character is described, must depend on the nature and quality of the individual to be represented. Where mental character is to be exhibited, the countenance must of course be resorted to to attain this important end. But when mere physical power or animal passion is to be represented, this may in some cases be as efficiently attained by the limbs as by the features.

Historical compositions in painting should in one sense be real portraits of the personages introduced,—exhibiting, indeed, the likeness not in the outward form and features, but in the true representation which they afford of the character of the individual portrayed. As in composition and description, so in the delineation of character and feeling, there is occasionally as much effect, and real force, too, in repose as in action.

There is a sort of infection in passion, even in the representation, so that the description of strong emotions of any kind at once excites corresponding feelings in the soul of the spectator, although different persons differ much as regards their disposition to be thus affected. In all cases the representation of passion or emotion should be that of nature, not of the imitators of nature; it should be supplied from real life itself.

The other mode of communicating ideas of the description referred to, is by putting such expressions into the mouths of the persons represented as will serve at once to afford a just and forcible notion as regards their qualities and feelings. By this

means both the general character and disposition, and also the peculiar temperament of mind at the time when the words were uttered are communicated; and the intellectual endowments and state of mental cultivation of the individuals are also made known to us.

This latter method of affording an idea of the character and feelings can of course be employed only in those arts, such as poetry and eloquence, which admit of language being expressed. The leading points to be embraced or represented in these different modes may be severally comprehended under the four main following heads:—1. Personal endowments. 2. Personal qualities. 3. Animal feelings. 4. Expression of sentiments.

III. (1.) The endowments, whether of mind or body, and whether natural or acquired, possessed by any person, are most important to be portrayed in this branch of the arts. Ideas of these may be conveyed either by description, as of the bodily appearance or conduct of an individual; or by an expression of them through his own declarations in a poem or an oration; or by a representation of his figure, when painting is the art which is resorted to.

According to Socrates, the human form is the most perfect of all forms. But above all "the human face divine," especially when illumined by the celestial ray of intelligence, and the fire of the soul, is of all objects not only the most perfect, but the most striking and the most glorious. And by the expression of the countenance it is that the endowments of the soul are reflected and represented.

In some of the works of the Greeks there seems to be a sort of immortality, a divine principle of life, which no mutilation can wholly destroy, no adverse circumstances entirely extinguish. Thus in the Elgin Marbles, shattered and defaced as is their outward frame, with scarcely a limb unbroken, or a feature which is not injured, such is the vigour of their style, and so brilliant was the celestial spark which animated them, that their grace and beauty and intellectuality still display themselves in their ruins, which are, unhappily, all that remain. And, indeed, doubtless the highest prerogative of the artist is the one which resembles that of the Divinity himself,

the power of giving life to his productions; for this, moreover, have the greatest geniuses in art been mainly distinguished.

No nobler examples, indeed, of the power of exhibiting both character and emotion are afforded than by some of the figures in the Elgin Marbles, and the horses as well as the men are thus highly endowed; the very stone appears to be rendered animate, every feature lives, every limb throbs.

Both character and emotion, whether represented through the countenance or the figure, should, conformably with the principles of composition already enunciated, have as it were a centre,—a leading feature,—to which all the other points in the composition should both be subordinate and tend. Every attitude and every action should be appropriate to the purpose sought to be attained. This is alike the case whether character or emotion are to be depicted. The group of the 'Laocoon' will afford an apt illustration of this principle, where the main cause of its effect is the uniformity and concentration in one purpose, as regards the end of all the emotions which it excites.

In the characters with which some of his angels are endowed, Raphael has shown what may be accomplished by art in this respect; the countenances are not merely lovely but divine. The union of intellect and of feeling and beauty of the highest order is here accomplished. Features, attitude, grace, action, figure,—all combine to aid the effect. His angels are not only superhuman but they are celestial also; and they are not only celestial but superhuman. Their very emotions and passions and actions, as well as the character of their countenances, betoken, too, their high nature, and their distinction from corporeal personages. Even sex seems to have been merged in their celestiality; and beings possessing the highest and purest qualities, are created by the artist's power. Nor in the expression and character which this great painter has given to persons intended to represent real men, has he been less successful, as evinced by the numerous exquisitely drawn countenances and figures depicted in the cartoons, each true to nature and to their own individual qualities. In the portrayal of beings of a higher order than the common race, care should be taken to endow

them with character in all respects suitable to their exalted station. Attitude and propriety of figure will sometimes essentially aid in the foregoing respects. Truth to nature forms as it were the climax which crowns the whole.

There is, moreover, to a certain extent an expression and a character too, not only in the face, but in the form and figure, which serves to correspond with, and to carry out the expression of the countenance. In the works of Michael Angelo, not merely the features of the persons represented display their peculiarities of character and emotion, but also their bodies and limbs and gestures, each essentially contribute to this end.

The artists of our day being so much limited in the exhibition of the naked figure, which afforded such extensive scope to the ancients in the display of their skill, and being also less aided by drapery, should rely more exclusively upon expression and character for the manifestation of their powers, and the full development of their genius. Thus, instead of being driven from a higher position to take refuge in a lower, are they expelled from a lower walk only to ascend to that exalted rank where those of the most sublime genius have excelled, and to shine in which is the most noble and the most intellectual attainment to which the artist can aspire. This alone ought to raise and dignify modern art, and to atone for many of the deficiencies under which it is supposed to labour.

IV. (2.) The qualities or moral attributes which any one possesses, constitute another main element in his character, and may be represented in the same way as his personal endowments.

In the consideration of the subject of the present section, it should be borne in mind that grace or beauty in a countenance, may be quite independent of its intellectual or moral qualities, as the most virtuous person may be hideously ugly, or the most depraved and wicked extremely handsome, and as such his appearance may be gratifying to the sight.

Probably the surest and most efficient mode of representing correctly the intellectual and moral character of any one, would be, in the first place, to sketch from nature a head which appeared generally suitable for the individual to be por-

trayed; and then to adapt, as exactly as possible, one by one, the different features according to the character intended, from the assortment of those classified for this purpose, as contained in the proposal in a subsequent section.*

Much, both as regards truth and vigour of expression in the representation of the disposition and moral character, may be gained by the observation of animals, and even of creation at large. Each animal has a distinct and forcible expression of its own, and when excited, both its countenance and general action vividly exhibit without affectation the qualities which characterize, and the feelings which agitate it. At different periods, too, of their growth, the various characters of animals, as affected by age and other circumstances, are fully and forcibly developed. And among them the greatest diversity of character—corresponding with that in the human species—is exhibited. In landscape scenery, and especially in vegetation, in clouds, in water, and in mountain views, every variety, both of emotion and character, is also displayed. Possibly, indeed, there is no character, no quality, and no passion in man, but what is here typified and reflected. The gestures, if not the expression of the countenances of animals, may afford many suggestions to the artist, and to the actor as well, in the delineation of those of man, more especially as animals are entirely natural and unaffected in all their actions. The real character is here fully evinced, and is more distinctly marked, and also more diversified than will be found to be the case,—or, strictly speaking, than is outwardly observable—in human nature. In animals, however, the general attitude of the figure, rather than the features, is what serves to characterize them. In man, both character and emotion are mainly developed through the countenance, which is far more expressive than in animals, while the motions of his body are retarded and concealed by clothing.

Some of the most distinguished pōets have resorted to the habits and demeanour of animals, for the purpose of adding effect to their description of the personal qualities possessed by their heroes. Thus, Homer† compares Menelaus, while re-

* *Vide post*, Sect. 8. † 'Iliad,' book xvii. lines 106–119.

tiring from the dead body of Patroclus, to a fierce shaggy lion, driven unwillingly and sullenly by men and dogs from the fold:—

"Slow he recedes, and, sighing quits the dead.
So from the fold th' unwilling lion parts,
Forced by loud clamours, and a storm of darts;
He flies indeed, but threatens as he flies,
With heart indignant, and retorted eyes.
Now enter'd in the Spartan ranks, he turn'd
His manly breast, and with new fury burn'd,
O'er all the black battalions sent his view,
And through the cloud the godlike Ajax knew."

The portrait of Charon, as drawn by Virgil,* is very striking and effective, on account of the personal qualities by which he is characterized; and the gloomy shade which the poet contrives to throw over the whole scene, contributes much to heighten the description. Every attribute ascribed to the grim ferryman is, moreover, in strict keeping and harmony with the general representation;—his terrible look, hoary beard, rude garments, and stern deportment, each alike add to the effect:—

"Portitor has horrendus aquas et flumina servat
Terribili squalore Charon, cui plurima mento
Canities inculta jacet, stant lumina flammâ;
Sordidus ex humeris nodo dependet amictus;
Ipse ratem conto subigit, velisque ministrat,
Et ferrugineâ subvectat corpora cymbâ,
Jam senior; sed cruda Deo viridisque senectus."†

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* 'Æneid,' lib. vi. lines 298–304.

† "There Charon stands, who rules the dreary coast—
A sordid god: down from his hoary chin
A length of beard descends, uncombed, unclean:
His eyes, like hollow furnaces on fire;
A girdle, foul with grease, binds his obscene attire.
He spreads his canvas; with his pole he steers;
The freights of flitting ghosts in his thin bottom bears.
He looked in years; yet, in his years were seen
A youthful vigour and autumnal green."

Dryden's 'Virgil.'

Chaucer's description of Licurge* derives its efficiency also from the same source. The poet depicts him with every characteristic calculated to give force and vigour to the representation, and to develope the qualities by which he is distinguished, alike as regards his appearance, his action, his demeanour, and each attendant circumstance about him:—

"Blake was his berd, and manly was his face.
The cercles of his eyen in his hed
They gloweden betwixen yelwe and red,
And like a griffon loked he about,
With kemped heres on his browes stout;
His limmes gret, his braunes hard and stronge,
His shouldres brode, his armes round and longe."

So also as regards the description of Emetrius,† which follows:—

"Upon a stede bay, trapped in stele,
Covered with cloth of gold diapred wele,
Came riding like the god of armes Mars.
. . . . . .
His crispe here like ringes was yronne,
And that was yelwe, and glittered as the sonne.
His nose was high, his eyen bright citrin,
His lippes round, his colour was sanguin,
A fewe fraknes in his face yspreint,
Betwixen yelwe and blake somdel ymeint,
And as a leon he his loking caste.
Of five and twenty yere his age I caste.
His berd was wel begonnen for to spring;
His vois was as a trompe thondering."

The portrayal of Arcite by the same poet,‡ is effected, both by the account which he affords of his personal appearance, and also by the information that he gives as to the conduct and demeanour of his hero; which together constitute a very vivid and moving picture, each aiding the other, and the two uniting their forces to add vigour to the whole:—

"His eyen holwe, and grisly to behold,
His hewe falwe, and pale as ashen cold

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* The Knightes Tale. † *Ibid.* ‡ *Ibid.*

And solitary he was and ever alone,
And wailing all the night, making his mone.
And if he herde song or instrument,
Than wold he wepe, he mighte not be stent."

In his description of the Nun,* Chaucer heightens his account of her by detailing her good qualities, her delicate manners, and the tenderness of heart:—

"At mette was she wel ytaughte withalle
She lette no morsel from hire lippes falle,
She wette hire fingres in hire sauce depe.
Wel coude she carie a morsel, and wel kepe,
Thatte no drope ne fell upon hire brest.
. . . . . .
She was so charitable and so pitous,
She wolde wepe if that she saw a mous
Caughte in a trappe, if it were ded or bledde.
Of smale houndes hadde she, that she fedde
With rosted flesh, and milk, and wastel brede.
But sore wept she if on of them were dede,
Or if men smote it with a yerde smert;
And all was conscience and tendre herte."

V. (3.) The animal passions emotions and excitements by which any person is agitated, may be represented in the same mode as that by which we describe his endowments and qualities.

It must, however, here be borne in mind that the more apparent and visible any emotion or passion is as regards its effects or operation, the more easy it is of imitation. Thus grief and anger may be counterfeited without difficulty by a skilful actor or cautious observer; but affection and love, which lie too deep to be seen on the surface, cannot be either described or represented with the same facility.

There is, nevertheless, not a feeling of joy however vivid, nor of sorrow however poignant; of mirth how buoyant it may be, nor of grief however piercing, that has not its corresponding chord in artistical melody, which may not be touched, and which will not echo to the full its sympathies. Thoughts and emotions are here as well, and as truly and forcibly developed,

* Prologue.

as figures are described; and characters and qualities are in all respects as correctly delineated as are landscape views.

In all persons of whatever character, or race, or sex, the feeling of pain, and the different emotions, are manifested in the countenance in a similar manner. This is the universal language of nature, which forms indeed a medium of communication, not only between men, but between all the members of animated creation. It is to this catholicity that art owes its power of speaking intelligibly to all alike.

Passion not only excites, but, to a certain extent also, invigorates the soul. Many of the greatest actions have been achieved when the mind was thus stimulated; and it is then that from its profoundest depths its dormant volcanoes burst forth, and exhibit their powers. Both poetry and eloquence, especially in their loftiest flights, are the offspring of passion.

Passion, meaning rage, has been denominated "a short madness." All the passions, however, more or less distort and blind the soul, and cause it to see objects differently from what it does in its calmer moments. The waters which are wont ordinarily to reflect the image so faithfully, when agitated cause the shadow itself to be disfigured and confused. This is to be borne in mind, both with regard to the representation of objects excited by passion, and as to the effect which such representations are intended to produce by calling forth corresponding passion in those to whom they are addressed. In these cases some departure from the strict rule of nature is allowable; and, indeed, the rule itself is relaxed even by nature its founder and its source. Exaggeration and distortion to a certain extent here take the place of regularity and order.

Thus, passion causes disorder and confusion in the mind, and consequently in the utterance of the thoughts. But passion and feeling, so far from confounding all individuality of character, serve rather the more strongly to develope it; they magnify rather than diminish its manifestations. Water is not less the ocean because agitated by storm, but its power and character are only more fully displayed.

One very strong passion may, nevertheless, occasionally be

so great and so overwhelming in its intensity, as not only to swallow up all the others, but to leave hardly anything besides of individual character perceptible in the person represented. Yet still the dark outline of the natural disposition and feelings is seen through the cloud of passion which envelopes it. The emotions and expressions are moreover ever tinctured by the character of the individual mind from which they spring.

A certain disorder of style may sometimes be fairly resorted to to exhibit intense passion, such as the transposition of words in oratory, and the irregular disposition of figures in an historical composition. So sudden transitions and abrupt terminations may produce the same effect. This is well displayed in the agitation of Macbeth as described by Shakspeare, denoted by broken ejaculations and disconnected exclamations.*

It is, nevertheless, wholly erroneous to suppose that the display of passion is incompatible with the expression of beauty, as tending necessarily and invariably to distort the latter, inasmuch as beauty is equally existent although thus excited. It may be thrown into the shade instead of shining in the sun; but it is still visible, and its shadows are even deeper. In many cases, indeed, the suffering and passion of beauty, both heighten and develope it; in poetry and eloquence this is certainly the case. Beauty and passion are in reality no more actually incompatible than are repose and grandeur. The passion does not destroy, by giving animation to the beauty. Each, indeed, should aid and give effect to the other. Moreover, the passions and emotions vary as much as regards their qualities as do the principles of the picturesque; some, such as anger and terror, inclining to force; others, such as love, to softness; some, like melancholy, to mildness; and others, such as laughter, to hilarity; corresponding with grandeur, beauty, pathos, and ridicule, in art. They constitute, in many cases, the operations of the mind caused by these principles.

Passion is, nevertheless, not only the effect, but it is the originating cause, the moving spring and the soul of eloquence, and in fact of poetry, and every other art. The representation of character and emotion must, of course, appeal not to the eye

* *Vide post*, Sect. 9, p. 107.

only, but to the feelings and the intellect. The feelings, however, may be much moved, and even the imagination excited, without the mind being vigorously affected.

The representation of the most violent passion is not always the most striking to the spectator. Activity and real strength are often found to be very different. The excitement of the emotion is, moreover, regulated by principles as certain as those of the limbs.

Animals afford splendid examples as regards the development of passion. And here both the living animal should be studied from nature, and also the best representations of character and emotion in them, as exhibited by art. Astonishment, grief, pain, and terror, which are the only passions evinced in animals, are more boldly and vigorously displayed in them than they are in man. Admiration, veneration, love, mirth, are peculiar to man, and not only diversify the character of the features, but also that of the other emotions.

In some of the boar-hunts, and other pieces of this kind, by Sneyders, there is as much character, and expression, and feeling, and passion, exhibited in the countenances and attitudes of the animals, as though they were human beings. Perhaps, indeed, as regards the gestures they assume, they display more real passion than is ever evinced by man. This power of describing animal character and feeling appears to be the characteristic and the forte of Sir Edwin Landseer; although it is to be observed that his expression is generally passive, while that of Sneyders is in most cases intensely active, which is, of course, more difficult to portray, and more effective when successfully accomplished.

Poetry is more successful in displaying the softer and less visible emotions and passions, than is the case with painting; but it is not so vigorous or direct in its mode of representation generally, especially as regards those feelings which are the most robust, and the most directly manifest. An illustration of this is afforded by the following passage in Homer,* where, in the description of the horses of Æacides weeping at the loss of their charioteer, who had fallen beneath Hector's fury, much

* 'Iliad,' book xvii. lines 424–442.

exquisite fine feeling is displayed. So warm is the affection of these animals, that they refuse to move either for blows or entreaties, but stand, like pillars at a grave, over the body of their master, their heads drooping down, tears flowing from their eyes, and their manes disordered:—

"Meantime, at distance from the scene of blood,
The pensive steeds of great Achilles stood;
Their godlike master slain before their eyes,
They wept, and shared in human miseries.
In vain Automedon now shakes the rein,
Now plies the lash, and soothes and threats in vain;
Nor to the fight nor Hellespont they go,
Restive they stood, and obstinate in woe:
Still as a tombstone, never to be moved,
On some good man or woman unreproved
Lays its eternal weight; or fix'd as stands
A marble courser by the sculptor's hands,
Placed on the hero's grave. Along their face,
The big round drops coursed down with silent pace,
Conglobing on the dust. Their manes, that late
Circled their arched necks, and waved in state,
Trail'd on the dust beneath the yoke were spread,
And prone to earth was hung their languid head."

In some descriptions in poetry of passion and feeling, the vigour is much heightened by comparing the person so affected to an animal whose excitement in this respect is more manifest, and apparently more intense, than is ordinarily seen in the case of man. Thus, Homer* compares the grief of Pelides, lamenting over the death of Patroclus, to the grief of a lion whose whelps have been stolen out of the thick forest, and who wanders distressed through the valleys trying to trace them out:—

"Stern in superior grief Pelides stood;
Those slaughtering arms so used to bathe in blood
Now clasp'd his clay-cold limbs: then gushing start
The tears, and sighs burst from his swelling heart:
The lion thus, with dreadful anguish stung,
Roars through the desert, and demands his young;
When the grim savage, to his rifled den
Too late returning, snuffs the track of men,

* 'Iliad,' book xviii. lines 314–323.

> And o'er the vales and o'er the forest bounds;
> His clamorous grief the bellowing wood resounds.
> So grieves Achilles; and impetuous vents
> To all his myrmidons his loud laments."

But although the exhibition of character and feeling is more open and more vivid in animals than in man, especially in the case of pictorial representation; yet there is much greater complexity and variety, both of disposition and passion, in the case of men than there is in animals; and corresponding with this circumstance the human face admits of considerably more changes than those of animals are capable of undergoing. Indeed, the diversity in the development of character possessed by the countenance of man is almost infinite; and this extends not only to mental differences and emotion, but to the exhibition of health, disease, youth, age, sex, and all their varieties of each kind.

VI. (4.) We have next to consider the expression of his sentiments by any particular person, as one of the modes for the representation of human character and emotion. By sentiment I here mean the general tone of the opinions or principles maintained by an individual, as whether high and noble, or mean and base, which of itself at once serves to confer a character on the person who utters them, corresponding exactly with the nature of the sentiments so expressed.

These sentiments are not only of various kinds, but may even contain principles of grandeur, as also of beauty in themselves; and their introduction into any composition serves to tincture its character accordingly, as will be observed in many of the following extracts.

Great, and noble, and sublime sentiments accord well with expressions grand in their nature; mild and amiable with those of beauty. Grandeur and beauty in sentiment consist, however, not so much in exciting actual ideas of grandeur or beauty, as in raising in the mind feelings corresponding with those which such sentiments would produce. Grand sentiments, for instance, like ideas of the same nature, elevate the mind, serve to stimulate it, and are of a painful rather than a pleasurable kind. Sentiments of a beautiful nature, on the

other hand, like ideas of beauty, are soothing and placid in their effect, and of a pleasing description.

It is, moreover, in all cases essential that a high tone of morality be maintained, and pervade the sentiments which are expressed, not only from the correctness of such a course, but because this is necessary in order to render the story tasteful and acceptable to the mind, which is naturally elevated by what is pure and ennobling, and no less naturally revolts at that which is mean and debasing. Whatever conduces to render an artistical performance, in either branch of art, displeasing or repulsive, tends to detract both from the excellence of the work itself, and to frustrate one of its chief ends. As a consequence also of this principle, the characters represented should correspond, as regards their dignity and high bearing, with that of the subject of which they form a part. In eloquence, and also in poetry, sentiment is the chief mode by which the expression of character and feeling is conveyed by inference drawn from it.

The language and style of speech made use of by each particular person, by which he expresses his ideas on any topic, afford the most perfect notion of the mind of such person, as here the very image of the soul is reflected in the most complete manner. No mechanical art being required to communicate oral language, it serves fully to convey the ideas in the mind of the speaker on which it is solely dependent; and the peculiarities of idiom and expression in the language of each individual, even more perfectly exhibit the peculiarities in the being from which they spring. The very pronunciation of each word evinces further the temperament and tone of mind; and the construction of the sentences, the intellectual feeling and taste of the orator. Thus the sentiments, although not containing any description, reflect as it were in their nature the character and feelings of the utterer of them. And even in descriptions themselves, the very manner of describing exhibits the mind of the narrator.

The character of a people is also to a large extent exhibited by the character of the language spoken by it while the character of the people in turn influences that language, and the various changes in its condition cause a change also in the dialect of

its tongue.* This is observable alike in individuals and in nations in several ways, as regards the manner in which they make use of the same language. Among the various nations both of antiquity and of our own day, we find the character of each country forcibly displayed by that of the language in use, especially as regards the Greeks and Romans in the former, and the French and Italians and Germans in the latter. Among different barbarous nations, too, this characteristic feature is equally discernible.

In painting and sculpture, on the other hand, we are led to infer the sentiments which are being spoken, from the expression of character and emotion contained in the composition; as in the cartoon of 'Paul Preaching at Athens,' where the appearance, countenance, attitude, and demeanour both of the orator and the audience convey to us vivid notions of the noble sentiments uttered by the former.

Indeed, the sensations and ideas called forth in the mind by objects of art, whether directly expressed or indirectly suggested, form of themselves an independent, although complete language, which if not equally definite, is at least equally forcible with that of words. Ideas are by this means originated in the mind, as efficiently as by letters or signs. And the subjects embraced by language, of which artistical representations, whether oral or visual, form the symbols, and which may be called the language of sentiment, extend to all those ideas and sensations of a refined nature by which taste and imagination, and whatever belongs to art of either kind, are excited.

The dignity of sentiment, and the exalted feelings expressed by Demosthenes, are what confer such grandeur on his orations, and give them also so much power. They are giants, as it were, among efforts of this class, in all their proportions and in all their movements. Thus the following magnificent exclamation,† raises at once in the mind the most sublime and noble ideas of the stupendous exertions which had been made through the energies of the orator in directing the resources of his

* *Vide* 'Civilization considered as a Science,' p. 39.

† Oration on the Crown, Lord Brougham's 'Demosthenes,' p. 200.

countrymen; and consequently also of the wisdom and patriotism by which he was distinguished.

"I have not fortified Athens with stone walls and tiled roofs; No, not I! Neither is it on deeds like these that I plume myself. But would you justly estimate my outworks, you will find armaments and cities and settlements, and harbours and fleets, and cavalry and armies raised to defend us; these are the defences that I drew round Attica, as far as human prudence could defend her, and with such outworks as these I fortified the country at large, not the mere circuit of the arsenal and the city."

Similar observations are applicable to his noble declaration in another part of the same magnificent oration :*—

"It is not true that you have done wrong, men of Athens! in fighting the battle of all Greece for her freedom and salvation! No! By your forefathers, who for that cause rushed upon destruction at Marathon, and by those who stood in battle array at Platæa, and those who fought the sea-fight at Salamis, and by the warriors of Artemisium, and by all the others who now repose in the sepulchres of the nation."

Here, not only the exalted nature, but the moral dignity of the sentiment conduces to its sublimity; and the reference to the valour of their ancestors, and to the sepulchres of these great men, heightens extensively the effect of the orator's appeal.

Some noble epic description is contained in the concluding passage of the eloquent oration of Æschines against Ctesiphon,† where after exclaiming :—

"I imagine that you see the great benefactors of your country in this place from whence I speak, arrayed against the villany of these men."

The orator goes on to summon them forth, as it were, while he names them.

"Solon, the man who adorned our free constitution with the noblest laws, the philosopher, the renowned legislator, entreating you with that decent gravity which distinguished his character, by no means to pay a greater regard to the speeches of Demosthenes than to your oaths and laws; Aristides, who was suffered to prescribe to the Greeks their several subsidies,

* Lord Brougham's 'Demosthenes,' p. 144. † Leland's 'Demosthenes.'

whose daughters received their portions from the people at his decease, roused to indignation at this insult on public justice." Each great character, as he is here introduced, is endowed with those noble attributes and qualities which so peculiarly become him; and the feelings with which the orator describes him to be animated, add immensely to the force and energy of the representation. Every attribute is, moreover, made to contribute to their dignity, moral indeed rather than physical. Their sublime virtues, more than their personal appearance or high rank, are what excite our admiration with regard to them. And their superior qualities are heightened by contrast with the baseness and infamy of those by whom they were opposed.

Of all the arts, eloquence is undoubtedly that which is mainly and most directly fitted for the expression of sentiment, and after that, poetry is the next best adapted for this purpose; as we shall indeed see from some of the examples afforded of its success here, in a subsequent section. Architecture and music, costume and gardening, are suggestive rather than expressive in the development of sentiment, as they must also necessarily be in the representation of endowments, qualities, and feelings; and acting is in each of these respects to be regarded rather as a very powerful and effective auxiliary art, than as an original agent in efforts of this kind.

VII. Reference has already been made in a preceding chapter to the practicability of comprehending in the same composition, a variety of opposite excellences as regards the general qualities of the art itself.* A question of a corresponding kind, although very different in its actual nature, but of equally great importance, demands our attention here; which is, whether it is possible to exhibit in the display of character and emotion, the contemporaneous operation of various feelings and endowments. The opinion of Sir Joshua Reynolds on both these points, has been adverted to, in which he denies that a compound character of this sort can in either case be effectively represented.

It appears to me, however, with all due deference to the high, and, indeed, almost absolute authority of Sir Joshua Reynolds, that that great painter and admirable critic on art

* *Vide ante*, Chapter V. Sect. 12.

was clearly erroneous in laying down as a fixed and unvarying principle, that a mixed character or passion cannot be represented in the same individual face or figure by painting.* I would suggest, indeed, that an essential distinction may, and ought here to be drawn between those different characters, and endowments, and qualities, and passions which are consistent and compatible together, and those which are inconsistent and incompatible; inasmuch as the former may be, and in nature are exhibited together, although this is never the case with regard to the latter. For instance, intelligence of character and the passion of terror, age and astonishment, youth and fear, may be well represented in any one person; although it may be impossible to depict in the same individual age and youth, fear and unconcern, malice and amiability.

But it is even possible for a person to be affected with both grief and joy at one time; as in the case of two announcements of great importance, but of an entirely opposite nature, reaching him at the same instant, when these two feelings might be seen contending together to obtain the ascendency over him. And if a person is so excited, a representation of him in art ought thus to portray him. If it fails to do so, the art is at fault. But if it be said that this is too difficult a process to achieve well, this I admit; but I still deny that the difficulty of the undertaking actually dispenses with the propriety of its performance. In some cases, indeed, the outward effects produced by strong emotions of opposite kinds, whether of joy or grief, are strikingly similar.

Because, therefore, some qualities, such as youth and age, or some feelings, such as tranquillity and rage, are, as already observed, incompatible, and cannot be together co-existent; it surely does not follow that all these different qualities, and characters, and passions, must be unfitted to be represented at once. One feeling and character may indeed, and probably will be always predominant; but it is not necessary that this should be so to the exclusion of all the rest. Strong excitement, to a certain extent, destroys individuality of character, by merging in the one vehement passion which obtains the whole

* 'Discourse V.'

mastery over the soul, all the impulses of the mind; but the latter, as already observed, retains its original traits in the violence of those impulses. So far, indeed, from the representation of a mixed passion being an impossibility, it appears to me that pure unmixed passion is but very seldom excited, and this it is consequently most difficult to express. It is, probably, very rarely, if ever, that one passion or emotion is called forth without the agitation of another, so dependent are they on each other. And if this be the case, surely the representation ought strictly, and as far as is attainable, to agree with the reality.

In the expression of the countenances of persons gifted with extraordinary virtues or endowments, the delineation both of character and passion is contemporaneously exhibited; it may happen, however, that in certain cases the manifestation of the character is modified by the passion, and the manifestation of the passion by the particular character possessed by the individual.

In Shakspeare's description of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, especially in certain of his most powerful and effective scenes, a mixed passion is that which animates them both, as will be remarked in the quotations which follow,* illustrative of this part of my subject, particularly in the dagger scene. Terror, cruelty, ferocity, weakness, force, courage, ambition, firmness, irresolution, hardness, remorse of conscience, and even some glimmerings of natural affection, may all of them, and all of them at once, be observed contending together. So also in 'Romeo and Juliet,'† the mixed feeling of passion for Romeo, and anguish and resentment at the death of Tybault by his hand,—of love for him, and fury against him,—the former unconquerable, the latter unrestrainable,—are very finely and wonderfully brought out:—

> "O serpent heart, hid with a flowering face!
> Did ever dragon keep so fair a cave?
> Beautiful tyrant! fiend angelical!
> Dove-feathered raven! wolvish—ravening lamb!
> Despised substance of divinest show!

* *Vide post*, Sect. 9. † Act iii. scene 2.

Just opposite to what thou justly seem'st,
A damned saint, an honourable villain!—
O nature! what hadst thou to do in hell,
When thou didst bower the spirit of a fiend
In mortal paradise of such sweet flesh? —
Was ever book containing such vile matter,
So fairly bound? O, that deceit should dwell
In such a gorgeous palace!"

Moreover, in architecture and in music, it is very seldom that one feeling or sentiment only is excited or suggested by the composition; and this is the case also with regard to acting, costume, and gardening. Indeed, in composition in each of these arts, the difficulty is undoubtedly far greater of representing or suggesting a character, or sentiment, or emotion which is entirely single or unmixed, than of describing one which is compounded or mixed; and, probably, in this respect, these arts serve but to reflect truly the real operation of every other art.

VIII. If, however, the importance of duly and correctly developing the character and expression of the individuals represented in pictorial composition be fully acknowledged, it must also follow, as a necessary consequence, that whatever contributes to enable us to effect this object, in the surest and most satisfactory mode, demands every attention that can be given to it. Nothing, indeed, appears more completely, or more directly adapted to ensure the due expression of character and emotion through the delineation of the countenance, than arriving at a certain and exact knowledge of the mode in which, through the countenance, these peculiarities are developed; and the reducing this knowledge, as far as possible, to a regular and methodical system applicable to practical operation.

Character as regards its manifestation by the face, appears to depend mainly on two principles. 1. The special individual form of each particular feature. 2. The action and operation of these several features. Here also is to be borne in mind the relation in respect to its formation and general character and operation of each separate feature to the other features, and to the whole face. The same rule extends to the entire figure. The motion too of each part of the figure, and of the limbs, is to be considered.

Forms of features must be of various kinds, according to the character of the particular countenance, and of the different features belonging to it. These admit indeed of as complete a classification as do the several kinds of form and colour; and a system or grammar might be written as to the application and employment of these subjects of each sort. I see therefore no reason why a complete classification should not be effected as regards the characteristics of the different features in the human countenance, and the various powers and qualities which each of them display, as perfect and ample in all respects as is the classification of colours in painting, or of different styles of rhyme and metre in poetry.

There can be no doubt, indeed, that a certain and specific individual peculiarity of character does attach to each single conformation of feature. Why should not this be analysed and arranged, as without such a process it is evident that no perfect delineation of character can be effected; while by this means such a representation may be accomplished, as complete as the imitation of nature in regard to her tints by the right ordering and application of colours? In the portrayal of animal passions and feelings, this has already to a certain extent been attained, of which we have an example in 'Le Brun's Passions.' Character doubtless admits of exactly the same classification and development. And indeed this has also been attempted, although not fully and systematically carried out, by Lavater, in his treatise on 'Physiognomy,' illustrated by engravings from the works of the great masters, in which he evinces at any rate the practicability of such a plan as that which I propose, and which would form a complete artistical grammar for the painter of human nature.

The only idea of perfect form in any of the features or limbs, appears to be derived from what we observe in nature, as to the effect produced by particular forms. Those which seem most perfect, we adopt alone as the models for imitation, even where we are unable to define exactly in what their perfection consists.

The principal features in the human countenance as regards the expression and character given to it, are the nose, the

mouth, and the eye. The first being the most prominent feature, its modulations and outline at once strike the attention, and in profile it characterizes the whole face. The form of the lips adds rather to the effect of the other features, than originates any expression. The eye gives character principally by the variations which it assumes. While at rest, it is the least, although in action the most expressive of all the features. The chin and the forehead only aid the other features, and are always passive.

Each feature may be varied in an almost infinite number of ways, and each variation affects the character of the countenance in some certain and particular manner. Every feature has, moreover, a character of its own, as has also every variation of each feature. And the principles which regulate these changes and characteristics, are as sure and immutable as those of any other branch of art, or any rule in anatomy. In Physiognomy, character is expressed by the formation of the features; passion by their action.

The English school of painting, and indeed those in general of modern times, are chiefly deficient in this point, which is doubtless the most important, and most exalted attainment with which art can be endowed, especially if it is to be regarded as representing human nature. Considering both the character and the value of this intellectual branch of the study of art, some certain and specific principles ought surely to be laid down for its regulation. In the works of Raphael, and of several of the greatest masters in the highest walk, but more especially in those of the former, this principle has been very fully, and indeed almost perfectly carried out.

There is no reason, indeed, why this very interesting and most important branch of the study of art should not be reduced to a regular system, forming as it in fact does the very basis and grammar of the most valuable and exalted,—the intellectual department of the subject. Its principles, moreover, are as certain and as ascertainable as are those of any other kind of learning; and it is alone by this means that in any age or country, painting will be raised to the rank it is not only capable, but worthy of attaining, by proving itself adapted for the perfect representation of human nature.

We are wont on all occasions to judge of the character of individuals in the first instance by their countenance. In some faces, the physiognomy is very striking, and serves at once to convey to us notions of persons particularly endowed with certain intellectual or moral qualities. In the case of every one we are able to decide somewhat more or less by this mode. But if we thus form an opinion from viewing the features, shall we not in like manner reason from the representations of them in pictorial composition; more especially as in the case of the latter, these contribute the only data afforded to us from which to draw our conclusions, while in the case of the former we may have opportunities of judging of them by their conversation, the reputation which they possess, or the works which they have produced?

If, moreover, the countenance affords us, as we all admit that it does, a real insight into, or leads us to form a correct opinion of the intellectual and moral character of any person, it must be owing to the conformation of the different parts of the face that this is the case; and there must necessarily belong to each feature a particular conformation indicative of a particular character.

It is obvious, therefore, that the most complete and intimate acquaintance, not only with the subject generally, but with its leading and direct principles, ought to be possessed; and the rules for its attainment should be as definite and as extensive as are those which have been so carefully laid down upon a matter far less important, the attainment of manual dexterity in the art. A knowledge of physiognomy is in reality as essential to a painter as a knowledge of anatomy. Physiognomy is, indeed, the anatomy of the features, which express the character and emotions of the soul.

In a manner corresponding with the classification of the features of the human countenance for the purpose of effecting, upon strictly systematic principles, the representation of character and emotion in pictorial art; might a classification of the general artistic characteristic features in other forms, objects and subjects, whether appertaining to architecture, music, acting, costume, or gardening be also attained, the practicability

of which will at once, indeed, be both illustrated and admitted, if we allow these arts to be capable of being employed in common with painting and sculpture in the representation of human nature, or even of nature generally.

IX. The correctness of the principles enunciated in the preceding sections, will be most satisfactorily proved by a reference to some examples of the most striking and successful efforts in each of the arts, which will afford an illustration of the combined operation of each of these principles together in the same composition, and of the results arising from their observance.

One of the greatest masters in painting, as regards the power of representing human character and feelings in all their varieties, was Rembrandt. His celebrated etching of 'The Triumph of Mordecai,' is a very admirable example of his skill in this respect. The great diversity of characters introduced, the individuality with which each is endowed, the different feelings so powerfully depicted which animate each breast, are exhibited in the most striking, though natural manner. Thus, the humbled pride of the haughty Haman, the modest gratification of the virtuous Mordecai, the rude boisterous exultation of the crowd who are spectators of the procession, are each very forcibly expressed, and to each countenance the character appropriate to it is annexed; to which, moreover, the attitude and demeanour of every figure, as well as the composition as a whole, extensively contribute.

The renowned etching by Rembrandt, which represents Christ healing the sick, commonly called 'The Hundred Guilder Piece,' is another composition of the same kind, exhibiting in the varied expression of the different figures and countenances, an extraordinary display both of character and emotion. Indeed, each figure and each feature will be observed to be endowed with its distinct and appropriate and very forcible expression. A few strokes serve to mark out the leading traits of what the artist intended, and suggest far more than they actually portray.

In this celebrated composition, our Saviour stands in the centre of the piece, a tall and dignified figure, but without any very

marked features in his countenance. His face is, however, mild, and his attitude is compassionate, stretching forth his right hand towards a poor woman who is approaching him with a sick child in her arms. By his side an aged female is kneeling in the attitude of intense supplication, her bare arms extended eagerly towards him. Behind her is a man imploring pity on a sick person who has been brought on a bed placed upon a barrow. Adjoining the latter is a striking form of an old blind man, a stick in his left hand by which he steers his way, and his right hand guided by an old woman at his side with an anxious countenance, apparently his wife. Another female form is kneeling in front of the Saviour with clasped hands; and beside her a poor woman is falling backwards, apparently fainting, at the Saviour's feet. To the extreme right is a group of persons with a camel, friends of the sick, or spectators of the scene. And to the extreme left is a group of elderly men, apparently persons of rank, who are eagerly discussing with varied sentiments the power and authority of Christ. Others are silently and eagerly looking on, intent upon the scene. An old man at the Saviour's right-hand, and close to him, seems incredulous as to the reality of the miracle which the generality present appear to be anticipating.

The most perfect example, however, of supreme excellence in this high branch of art, is the great painter Raphael, in those most splendid of his vast productions, his cartoons, which are emanations from a mind of the highest genius, and possessing an intimate knowledge of all the most important and noble principles of art, and which consequently afford the richest and most profitable field for contemplation and study, as regards the department of the arts now under consideration.

Raphael's great merit appears to me mainly to consist in his uniting so much force and truth in the representation of character, with such chasteness, dignity, and simplicity, as regards the general design of his subject. He is always powerful, but never extravagant; his countenances are endowed with a dignity superior to that of ordinary man, but they are nevertheless never at variance with what we experience in nature. Every passion and character he exhibits to the full, but he

never degenerates into deformity or caricature. He is at once the most intellectual of painters as regards the endowments of mind which he confers on his characters, and the most natural as regards the truth with which he delineates the visible expression of their feelings and countenances. He often much moves, but he never displeases us, by the vehemence of the passions which he represents. We are frequently astonished, but never disgusted by the harrowing scenes that he describes. And in the narration of the story, there is a clearness and simplicity which add immensely to its force. His characters are real, because all collected from the stores of nature; but they are also at the same time ideal, because never in nature are so many excellences combined in one object. From the halo thrown around his works by the radiance of his genius, his children are elevated into cherubs, his women into angels, and his men into divinities.

The first of the productions of Raphael to which I shall here advert, is his cartoon of 'Paul Preaching at Athens,' to the composition of which I alluded in a former chapter.* The character of St. Paul, as he is here described, is of the utmost dignity and sublimity. He is at once perceived to be the principal figure in the group, his prominence in which is aided by his position on an eminence above the others; and the various personages in it, by their posture, and from their attention being evidently turned towards him, each contribute to mark him out as an individual of the highest importance in the transaction.

His attitude denotes that he is addressing with great earnestness, suitable to the feelings which we are told were then excited in his breast, those assembled around him, who must be supposed to consist of persons of a superior grade and order in life, and to comprise individuals of several different sects and parties, who would be variously affected by the discourse. The subject on which he is haranguing them is of the utmost possible importance, and of the most exalted nature.

In the countenance of St. Paul, energy, goodness, dignity, and intellectual power, are very finely depicted and blended together. He appears by the force of his eloquence to have en-

* *Vide* Chapter VIII. Sects. 3, 5.

tirely absorbed the attention of his audience. And although the account which we have received of him describes him as a man of small stature, and mean in his appearance; yet with respect to the general character which by the sacred historian is attributed to him of uncompromising boldness in the cause he had espoused, and as regards also his powerful and eloquent address, we find him correspondingly and correctly here portrayed. The great artist, in his delineation of him, seems to aim at conveying to us ideas rather of his intellectual character and endowments, than of his personal appearance; his object has been to afford to us through the latter a motive more of his mental than his material frame; and he has thus rendered him one of the most sublime and noble characters which has adorned any representation of this kind.

It might be laid down as a general rule, or the principle may be deduced from these great works of Raphael, as well as from certain other eminent performances in different branches of the arts, that in the delineation of the principal person in the transaction, whose character and intellectual qualities are so important with regard to the whole, these latter endowments should be described so as to afford us a just and ample notion of them; while, in the representation of the subordinate persons, their passions and feelings, more especially as these have been excited by the conduct of the principal individual in the transaction, are what mainly require to be exhibited.

Although there may perhaps be several exceptions to this rule pointed out, and that even in the works of Raphael, yet it is undoubtedly peculiarly applicable to the composition before us, as also to the characters described by some of our greatest poets.

The leading emotions denoted both by the attitude and countenance of the man whose hands are raised, and of the woman by his side, both of them being placed to the right of St. Paul, are those of astonishment admiration and awe, excited by what they have heard. The mind of each of them appears riveted to the subject, and their feelings are evidently strongly roused. These persons are intended to represent Dionysius and Damaris, who, we are told, were among those upon that occasion converted to Christianity.

The expression of thoughtfulness mixed with incredulity and malignity displayed in the countenance of the old man leaning on a staff is very fine; he is evidently much moved by what he has heard, although apparently unwilling to be persuaded. He appears rather, indeed, to be meditating for arguments in refutation of the doctrines which have been delivered, than desirous of examining them with candour, and seems perplexed by the subject. The emotion which is exhibited in the face of the man who is sitting on the steps behind St. Paul, with his hand clenched and placed before his mouth, marks strongly the anger and contempt which he feels both for the Apostle's discourse, and on account of the effect which it has produced among his hearers. His features are quite distorted by the intenseness of his agitation, and passion and excitement are strongly displayed in them. Various sentiments appear to pervade the different spectators in the group, according to the manner in which the precepts of the Apostle were received by them. In this, as in other compositions by the same great master, it may be observed that the several characters and feelings represented both serve to set-off each other, and to aid the effect of the whole.

The cartoon intended to represent 'Christ's Charge to Peter,' or the delivery of the keys, is one of the most perfect, and in all respects admirable among them.* The qualities of benignity, affection, and mildness, are strongly marked in the countenance of our Saviour, while, pointing to the flock of sheep near them, he is about to address St. Peter, who is kneeling before him. There is great majesty, unmixed with pride, in the expression of Christ, and much kindness and gentleness without any mark of effeminacy. The face of St. Peter is full of enthusiasm and devotion, and denotes the strongest feelings of awe and affection. The whole head is very finely drawn, and displays much of the character of St. Peter, as he is described to us. Although there is a considerable dignity in his countenance, yet it is at the same time expressive of deep humility, and his whole appearance coincides with what we have learnt of his conduct and disposition.

* *Vide* Chapter VIII. Sect. 5.

The other persons in the group, who represent the Apostles, and the head of the old man in the back part of it, who is noting with the most marked attention what is passing, are exquisitely portrayed; and the variety of characters among them which we may observe to be depicted with the greatest perspicuity and effect, affords another excellent example of the mode of representing a scene of this importance and dignity, by the great artist who produced the work.

In the cartoon of 'The Lame Man Healed,' at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple, there are some very fine examples of the manner of exhibiting the character and feelings of the persons represented in a transaction of moment. The countenance of the man who has just been restored to a sound state, and who forms the principal figure in the composition, is expressive of the greatest degree of joy and wonder at his deliverance, and of gratitude towards his benefactor. He appears to feel conscious of his cure, and as though he perceived that the disease had been extirpated from his frame by the agency of the Apostle. The face of this man is suitable to the rank he is supposed to hold, and possesses none of the intellectual dignity or superiority which is displayed in the countenance of some of those to whom I have already referred. The expression of the other beggar, who is seen behind the Apostle, is strongly characterized by malignity and superstitious degradation; his eye is fixed upon the Apostle, and he appears enraged at the preference shown to the man whose limbs have been restored. His general character, which is forcibly exhibited both in his features and in the attitude and figure he displays, is brutal and ferocious.

The cartoon from which I have selected these two figures for examination, is one of the most striking among the number, both as regards the development of the character and feelings of the persons represented, and the mode in which the artist has contrived to narrate with the utmost effect and propriety, the transaction intended to be described.

The next of these splendid masterpieces of art, from which we may select examples in illustration of the principles which I have been adducing, is that which represents 'The Death of

Ananias,' who appears the principal figure in the composition, and who is falling down lifeless at the words of St. Peter. In his countenance meanness and hypocrisy are forcibly delineated; and feelings of mental anguish and despair, as well as of corporeal suffering, seem to be struggling together. We may perceive from the condition of his features that he has already ceased to breathe; his eyes have become dim, and his countenance is inanimate, though still retaining the cast which his previous state of mind had given to it. His whole figure and attitude contribute much to the effect of the scene. The countenance of the Apostle, who has just been reproving Ananias with great vehemence, is exceedingly fine. Great dignity, justice, and sternness are exhibited in his character, which is not, however, so expressively delineated by his features as is that of the principal figure, Ananias; and his indignation appears to be much roused. The expression of horror, mixed with astonishment, which thus shows that the event was wholly unlooked for, if not supernatural, in the countenance of the man who with uplifted hands is placed behind, is extremely striking. His agitated brow and startling eyes and mouth half closed, while he seems to shrink back aghast from the dreadful scene, describe the intensity of his feelings in a very forcible manner. Youth and middle age appear to be thus alike affected. And the auxiliary portions and scene in the background, serve much to aid and add effect to the more prominent parts of the picture. This composition, as a whole, is one strongly calculated to excite the most lively emotions.

The representation of 'Elymas the Sorcerer struck Blind,' contains two figures that are peculiarly worthy of examination in the consideration of the subject of the present chapter. The principal person in the group is Elymas, who has just been struck with blindness by the Apostle St. Paul, and is holding out his hands to feel his way, and seeking for aid. In his countenance much cunning and imposture are depicted; his utter helplessness, and confusion, and shame, in his present state, are very finely expressed. His pride appears to render him only ridiculous in his degraded condition, when his pretended power proved utterly unavailable. The character of

the person near him, who is steadfastly looking him in the face, is admirably represented. Wonder, doubt, and curiosity, are strongly expressed in his features, as he endeavours to ascertain the reality, or the cause of the sudden affliction of the magician.

The head of St. Peter, in the cartoon representing 'The Miraculous Draught of Fishes,' is one of the most admirable of Raphael's works. His countenance is full of dignity, with humility, veneration, and affection united in it. He is represented as looking up to Christ, with the highest feelings of respect and adoration, having just pronounced the words, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" His whole posture and demeanour, as well as the general appearance of his features, and the deportment and contour of his figure, are finely expressive of the character of St. Peter.

The countenance of the Apostle St. James, who is represented in profile in the same boat, and who appears to be deeply interested in the conversation that is going forward, is extremely fine. His character seems to be that of enthusiastic affection and reverence for his Divine Master, while, with the greatest humility, he listens attentively to the discourse which is taking place between St. Peter and our Lord.

The last of the cartoons is the representation of 'Paul and Barnabas at Lystra,' when the people prepared to offer sacrifices to them. The countenance of St. Paul is highly expressive of piety and humanity, and he seems to be much affected both with pity and remorse at the superstitions displayed on his account. He appears to wish to withdraw himself from the scene, and turns away in disgust from viewing the idolatrous ceremonies which are about to be performed. The expression of the man round whose head a wreath is bound, and who is aiding in the sacrifice, is characterized by the wildest enthusiasm and superstition. He appears still to view the Apostles as superhuman beings, and with mixed feelings of awe, terror, and admiration.

The expression also of the person whose face is seen in profile, and who has been lately healed by the Apostle, is highly characteristic of superstitious enthusiasm; while that depicted in

the countenance of the old man who is anxiously viewing the recently restored limb of the former, to discover whether the cure had actually been effected, delineates with great force the wonder by which he is excited.

Raphael's exquisite picture of 'The Entombment of Christ,' which is contained in the Borghese Palace at Rome, is a splendid, and even perfect example as regards composition and expression combined, as, indeed, they ever ought to be, and harmoniously to blend, and to aid one another in every artistical performance of this description. We are particularly struck by the demonstration of grief and of awe in the countenances of the different persons, which their attitudes also serve to show. The Virgin Mary, as becomes her, is most of all affected; and ghastly pale, is fainting, overwhelmed with agony at the mournful spectacle.

In sculpture, hard and inflexible as is the material here employed, a wonderful degree of character and emotion has in some instances been nevertheless displayed. Expression and feeling may, by this art, occasionally be represented with nearly the same force as in painting. The aid of colour, which is often of great service in depicting the hues which the countenance assumes under various tortures, or the agonies of disease, and also during the raging of tempestuous passions, is, nevertheless, wanting here. But it is amply, if not more than adequately supplied by the shape being given, which in visual objects is perhaps the point most important. And in the case of marble busts and statues which are of pure white, the perfect mode in which the light and shade are exhibited, serves most strongly to mark the features, and to give effect to the expression, so as almost to atone for the loss of colour.

In the head of 'Alexander the Great' while dying, generally known as the mask of Alexander, the hero and conqueror are very nobly depicted. Greatness and majesty of soul are evinced in every feature; while the pain which tortures him, and the deathlike haggardness of his features, are sublimely expressed. The wrinkled brow, the fixed eyes, the parched lips, the burning cheeks, the matted hair,—although in a material so hard

and so different from that of nature,—are each here represented with truth and vigour.

In the group of 'The Laocoon,' the writhing contortions both of the forms and of the limbs, as also the expression of the countenances of each individual, serve to mark the agony with which they are tortured. The features are, indeed, too much distorted by pain to enable us to trace any particular marks of character. This justly renowned piece of sculpture serves, moreover, to afford a very striking, and indeed perfect proof of the extent to which emotion and passion may be exhibited both by the face and the figure, which in this splendid work not only aid, but vie with each other in producing the effect at which both aim, and which by their united efforts is so forcibly achieved.

In the delineation of passion, we see in the case of some of the most famous statues of antiquity, where this branch of art has been very successfully attained, in 'The Laocoon' for instance,* that the contortions of the figure have contributed even more to exhibit the emotions of the soul, than has the expression of the countenance.

In the vigorous and animated representation of human characters and feelings as evinced by different persons, both by description of their persons, and the expression of the sentiments which they utter, many of the greatest poets have eminently excelled. The characters in Homer are very effectively portrayed as regards their outward appearance; and such language is put into their mouths as is calculated to afford us the most vivid notions of their intellectual qualities. The passions which variously on different occasions agitate them, are in like manner very forcibly exhibited. Indeed, in the delineation of character, Homer has no superior, save only Shakspeare.

I have in a preceding chapter considered the description which Milton gives of the exalted individuals whom he introduces into his sublime poem. He also makes them utter the most lofty and noble sentiments, thus affording to us the sublimest notions of their intellectual qualities and endowments.

* Sir Joshua Reynold's Disc., lect. x.

Dante occasionally displays considerable power in representing character and passion, which he attains both by description and expression; and he is especially remarkable for the fervour with which in some of his scenes the feelings appear to work. Thus the intensity of the emotion which agitates the spirits in the Stygian lake is effectively depicted by him in the following passage,* where not only their limbs are represented to be in motion, but each part of the body is excited by the fury which propels them:—

> "A miry tribe, all naked, and with looks
> Betokening rage. They with their hands alone
> Struck not, but with the head, the breast, the feet,
> Cutting each other piecemeal with their fangs."

So also the action from pain of the tormented spirits in the fiery flood,† is very striking and touching:—

> "Unceasing was the play of wretched hands,
> Now this, now that way glancing, to shake off
> The heat, still falling fresh."

The description of the cries, as also of the motions of the tormented spirits,‡ is very fine, and is extremely affecting from the intensity of the agony which it represents:—

> "They, when we stopp'd, resumed their ancient wail,
> And, soon as they had reach'd us, all the three
> Whirl'd round together in one restless wheel."

But the poet who has most excelled in this highest branch of art, as he was in every respect most perfect in the delineation both of human character and emotion, is Shakspeare. From reading his descriptions you may sometimes almost imagine that you have formed an acquaintance with the persons he introduces, have even dived into the secret recesses of their minds, and that their characters have been developed and laid open before you, so strikingly does he present to you the ideal description and mental delineation of the individuals whose endow-

* Inferno, canto 7. † *Ibid.* canto 14. ‡ *Ibid.* canto 16.

ments and actions he represents. As the transaction proceeds, the same character is preserved with extraordinary consistency to each particular person throughout the narration. Various are the individuals who move upon the stage, and very different dispositions and qualities are in several ways exhibited to our notice. Feelings of opposite kinds become excited, passions break forth and rage around us with all the heat and fury of real action, yet without ever "overstepping the modesty of nature." We appear to be actually present in the scene; the ideas of it seem to shoot into our minds as vividly as though they were excited by the contemplation of the event itself.

I have here selected some very fine examples, descriptive both of character and feeling, as exhibited in the appearance of the persons alluded to; and also some expressions which this great poet has put into the mouths of certain of the individuals represented by him, which in like manner afford us ideas of their mental endowments and dispositions. The first is a descriptive piece, in which the appearance of a man agitated by strong feelings and passions is very forcibly delineated. The individual alluded to is Cardinal Wolsey, who is vehemently excited with regard to certain transactions which were then taking place in the court of Henry, and the issue of which he foresaw might terminate, as it eventually did, in his fall.

He is thus described by the Duke of Norfolk, in his conversation with King Henry, in answer to an inquiry from the latter as to whether he had seen the Cardinal:—

> "My lord, we have
> Stood here observing him. Some strange commotion
> Is in his brain: he bites his lips, and starts;
> Stops on a sudden, looks upon the ground,
> Then lays his finger on his temple; straight,
> Springs out into fast gait; then stops again,
> Strikes his breast hard; and anon, he casts
> His eye against the moon: in most strange postures
> We have seen him set himself."*

In the account here afforded of the uneasy expression, the

* 'Henry VIII.,' act iii. scene 2.

convulsed start, the sudden motion, the wild look, and the strange attitudes and demeanour of the Cardinal, there are conveyed to us vivid ideas of a man enduring great torture of mind, and harassed by the apprehension of some foreseen catastrophe.

The appearance which the countenance presents when any person is agitated by excessive horror, is very forcibly described by the ghost in 'Hamlet' in the following passage:—

"But that I am forbid
To tell the secrets of my prison house,
I could a tale unfold, whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul; freeze thy young blood;
Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres;
Thy knotted and combined locks to part,
And each particular hair to stand on end,
Like quills upon the fretful porcupine;
But this eternal blazon may not be
To ears of flesh and blood."*

The examples which follow are of sentiments put into the mouths of the personages introduced, by which we are led to form ideas of their characters and state of mind at the time. The first of these serves very vividly to convey to us an impression of the wild enthusiastic character, and of the agitated feelings of the person who is speaking. Both the sentiments which he utters, and the incoherent extravagant style in which they are expressed, reflect his condition. It is the soliloquy of Hamlet, who is affected with the utmost grief and indignation while reflecting on his father's sudden and mysterious death, and the marriage of his mother very shortly after that event; and on the extraordinary appearance to him of his father's ghost:—

"O, that this too too solid flesh would melt,
Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew!
Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! O God!
How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable
Seem to me all the uses of this world!"†

* 'Hamlet,' act i. scene 5. † *Ibid.* act i. scene 2.

In the following quotation from the same splendid tragedy, emotions which are very strongly excited, are expressed in the most vivid and striking manner. The person who gives utterance to them is Hamlet, immediately after the conversation with his father's ghost, and the disclosure of his murder by his brother. After vehemently exhorting Hamlet to "remember" him, and to avenge the deed, the ghost suddenly vanishes, leaving Hamlet by himself, who, with the most poignant feelings, thus breaks forth :—

"O all you host of heav'n! O earth! What else?
And shall I couple hell?—Oh, fie!—Hold, my heart;
And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,
But bear me stiffly up!—Remember thee?
Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat
In this distracted globe.—Remember thee!
Yea, from the table of my memory
I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,
All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past,
That youth and observation copied there;
And thy commandment all alone shall live
Within the book and volume of my brain,
Unmix'd with baser matter: yes by heaven!"*

In these two quotations, the passions expressed are so vehement, that little can be discerned of particular points of character; the torrent foams so impetuously along, that every object beneath its surface is lost in the spray.

The feelings of terror, and the tortures of a wounded conscience, which agitated the mind of Macbeth as he grasped the sword with which he was about to murder Duncan, who had placed himself in his power as his visitor, and was then asleep, unsuspicious of treachery, in Macbeth's castle, are expressed with extraordinary energy and vividness. The view of the weapon, and the contemplation of the horrid deed, seem quite to unman the assassin. All the horrors of guilt at once assail him, and he appears to tremble at the very thought of what he is about to perpetrate; although he was a man of great personal courage, and, as he himself declares, he "dare do all

* 'Hamlet,' act i. scene 5.

that may become a man." His fears arise rather from his reflections on the enormity of the deed, than from the belief that any immediate, or even ultimate danger is to be apprehended in consequence. Every sound seems to thrill through his soul, and every object becomes one of dread :—

"Is this a dagger, which I see before me,
The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee:—
I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.
Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible
To feeling as to sight? or art thou but
A dagger of the mind, a false creation,
Proceeding from the heat oppressed brain?
I see thee yet, in form as palpable
As this which now I draw.
Thou marshal'st me the way that I was going;
And such an instrument I was to use.
Mine eyes are made the fools o' the other senses,
Or else worth all the rest: I see thee still;
And on thy blade and dudgeon gouts of blood,
Which was not so before.—There's no such thing.
It is the bloody business, which informs
Thus to mine eyes."*

The character of Lady Macbeth is very admirably exhibited in the sentiments which she is made to express, and is preserved with extraordinary consistency throughout the tragedy. She appears to be endowed with fierce ambition, and with very great courage and bloody dauntless resolution; and urges on her husband to the commission of enormities at the contemplation of which even he was made to shudder. Her ferocity and relentlessness are displayed with peculiar effect by her boasting that those qualities most natural to her sex have been extirpated, through the predominance of the fierce passions and desires by which she was governed, and her natural affections subdued or effaced; as she exclaims, while, with a savage eagerness, she hurries on her husband to the treacherous murder of their guest, and taunts him with cowardice at his apparent reluctance to imbue his hand in so foul a deed :—

* 'Macbeth,' act ii. scene 1.

"I have given suck, and know
How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me:
I would, while it was smiling in my face,
Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums,
And dash'd the brains out, had I so sworn
As you have done to this."*

In another part of this tragedy the poet contrives, with admirable skill and knowledge of the workings of human nature, to inform us, that, amidst all the cruelty, and ferocity, and lawless ambition which raged in the mind of Lady Macbeth, some feelings of affection, and some natural compunctions still remained unsubdued, which are occasionally observed struggling with the more violent passions of her mind; as she says to herself, when she believes that Duncan had awaken, just as Macbeth entered his chamber to murder him, and that the horrid deed had consequently not been consummated:—

"Had he not resembled
My father as he slept, I had done't." †

The conversation in act iv. scenes 2, 3, between Lady Macduff, her son Rosse, and the murderers, is very perfect and affecting. A great deal of character is exhibited in the boy, by the few touches of the poet, especially as regards the intelligence and spirit evinced in his replies. In act v. scene 5, the repining of Macbeth at his cheerless life, and the questions to the physician, are full of character and feeling. The soliloquy on life in scene 5, is also most powerful in this respect.

In the sentiments which are uttered by the Duke of Buckingham, after his conviction, while he is being removed to the Tower, we have afforded to us an admirable view of the magnanimity and true greatness of his character. We cannot but be struck with the resignation and fortitude that he displays, when the certain prospect of an ignominious death is before him. He seems to have subdued every revengeful feeling towards his oppressors; and his loyalty and even affection towards his sovereign remain unshaken amidst all the trials of persecution. Sir Thomas Lovell having asked him for forgive-

* 'Macbeth,' act i. scene 7. † 'Macbeth,' act ii. scene 2.

ness, if he had ever borne any malice against him, the Duke replies :—

"Sir Thomas Lovell, I as free forgive you,
As I would be forgiven: I forgive all:
There cannot be those numberless offences
'Gainst me, I can't take peace with:
No black envy shall make my grave.
Commend me to his grace;
And if he speak of Buckingham, pray, tell him,
You met him half in heaven: my vows and prayers
Yet are the king's; and, 'till my soul forsake,
Shall cry for blessings on him. May he live
Longer than I have time to tell his years!
Ever belov'd and loving may his rule be!
And when old Time shall lead him to his end,
Goodness and he fill up one monument!"*

In the different personages which Shakspeare has introduced into his tragedies, he has, as already remarked, preserved with wonderful accuracy the same consistent character throughout. His Hamlet, and Macbeth, and Lady Macbeth, and Buckingham, appear the same alike as regards intelligence, disposition, and feeling, in each of the several scenes in which they take part. It is indeed very wonderful, and the highest genius, and most perfect knowledge of the principles and the workings of human nature, in all its varieties, and under all circumstances, could alone enable the great poetic artist to achieve such an undertaking. The actions and sentiments and manner of expressing their ideas, in his most elevated characters, are moreover natural and suitable, on all occasions. The feelings which are excited are also consistent with the persons in whom they are called forth, and with the events which produced them. He has, indeed, well merited the dignified appellation of "the poet of nature," who so wondrously saw and felt and expressed, with force and accuracy, the several operations in all their varied phases which she displays.

In order, however, further to illustrate the principles enunciated in the present chapter, I will now proceed to point out their application in the examples afforded from a scene por-

* 'Henry VIII.,' act ii. scene 1.

trayed by the pen of the same great master from whose works I have been quoting, and which is one of the most perfect and most striking which he has produced. I allude to that in the second part of the tragedy of King Henry the Sixth,* which represents the death of Cardinal Beaufort.

The wretched old man is lying on his bed in the agonies of death, and King Henry and the Earls of Salisbury and Warwick enter into his chamber to take their last leave of him. The feeling of extreme horror in the Cardinal at the approach of death, heightened by the pangs of conscience which he endured, as he was supposed to have aided in the murder of the good Duke Humphrey of Gloucester, and to have been guilty of other heinous crimes, is forcibly represented; and his delirious exclamations when his thoughts appear to wander to the subject most weighty on his conscience, the murder of the Duke, add much to the terror of the scene. We must also observe how perfectly the different feelings, according to their respective characters and dispositions, are described as operating in the minds of the King and those accompanying him, in the conversation that ensues. King Henry first addresses the Cardinal:—

"How fares my lord? speak, Beaufort, to thy sovereign."

To whom the Cardinal replies, half unconscious of what he is saying, and in the greatest agonies, as the poet informs us by the answer given:—

"If thou be'st death, I'll give thee England's treasure,
Enough to purchase such another island,
So thou wilt let me live, and feel no pain."

The King then observes, which by the contrivance of the poet serves still further to point out the cause of the agony in the mind of the Cardinal:—

"Ah, what a sign it is of evil life,
Where death's approach is seen so terrible!"

Warwick next addresses him, in order to elicit an answer to the King's inquiry on first speaking to him:—

"Beaufort, it is thy sovereign speaks to thee."

* Act iii. scene 3.

From the expressions which are uttered by Beaufort, we learn that his delirium has now overpowered him, and that the dreadful subject of the murder of the Duke occupies his wandering mind. The fear of being brought to trial,—the horrible object of his murdered victim,—the thought of destroying himself by poison,—all at once force themselves upon his imagination. His exclamation,

"Oh! torture me no more, I will confess,"

seems to infer that in his agonies he had wildly supposed he was undergoing the tortures of the rack, that was had recourse to in those times to compel a discovery of crime. He thus talks to himself in his delirium :—

"Bring me unto my trial when you will.
Died he not in his bed? where should he die?
Can I make men live, whe'r they will or no?
Oh! torture me no more, I will confess,—
Alive again? then show me where he is;
I'll give a thousand pound to look upon him.—
He hath no eyes, the dust hath blinded them,—
Comb down his hair; look! look! it stands upright,
Like lime twigs set to catch my winged soul!
Give me some drink, and bid the apothecary
Bring the strong poison that I bought of him."

King Henry's feeling of horror and pity, is very finely expressed. His allusion to the evil spirit, watching the soul of the dying person, adds much to the effect of the scene :—

"O thou eternal mover of the heavens,
Look with a gentle eye upon this wretch!
O, beat away the busy, meddling fiend,
That lays strong siege unto this wretch's soul,
And from his bosom purge this black despair!"

The observation of Warwick serves to afford a description of the horrible appearance of the wretched man :—

"See how the pangs of death do make him grin."

Salisbury's remark also denotes that his end is now approaching :—

"Disturb him not, let him pass peaceably."

King Henry's command to Beaufort to make signal of his hope, if he has any; and his observation that he dies without doing so, complete the horror of the scene:—

> "Peace to his soul, if God's good pleasure be!
> Lord Cardinal, if thou think'st on heaven's bliss,
> Hold up thy hand, make signal of thy hope.—
> He dies, and makes no sign: O God, forgive him!"

The observation of Warwick serves to inform us of the signs of terror in his conscience which the Cardinal had exhibited, and to show the origin to which those around him knew they were to be attributed:—

> "So bad a death argues a monstrous life."

The reply of King Henry is full of pity and charity and piety, by which indeed he is characterized throughout the dreadful scene; while Warwick, in both the latter observations which he makes, displays little of either. Salisbury is more feeling, and exhorts them not to disturb the wretched man. Henry's remark closes the scene, and serves to inform us that, as regards the Cardinal, all is now over; the offices due to the dead alone remain to be fulfilled:—

> "Forbear to judge, for we are sinners all.—
> Close up his eyes, and draw the curtain close;
> And let us all to meditation."

We cannot but be struck with the extraordinary power and effect with which this harrowing scene is described throughout. We imbibe the ideas of it almost as vividly from what is here expressed by the different characters, as though we were present; inasmuch as the principal ideas which we should obtain by this means are very forcibly transmitted to our minds by the poet. Both the description afforded of the various objects in the transaction, and the sentiments and feelings with which we become acquainted through the language uttered by the persons introduced, alike contribute with the strongest effect to perfect the representation.

Poetry and eloquence, as I have already stated, are so nearly lli ed in their nature, that what I have here remarked with

regard to the one, will apply almost equally well to the other. Indeed, according to the principles which I before laid down,* many of the addresses contained in the foregoing quotations, might be contended strictly to belong rather to eloquence than to poetry.

Eloquence admits of description as well as expression, as fully, and more freely than poetry does. For the representation of the feelings and passions of the mind, this art is more directly adapted than is even poetry; and its chief purpose and object are to describe in the most powerful and effective manner sensations of this kind. In this respect, indeed, poetry only follows eloquence. As regards expression of character by sentiment, eloquence is therefore very powerful and efficient. The quotations already made from Demosthenes in a preceding section, may again be referred to as illustrations. So also as regards Cicero, the following sentiments which he delivers at the commencement of his fourth oration against Catiline, serve to afford us as complete an insight into his character as though he were present before us.

"Ego sum ille consul, Patres conscripti, cui non forum, in quo omnis æquitas continetur; non campus, consulariis auspiciis consecratus; non curia, summum auxilium omnium gentium; non domus, commune perfugium; non lectus, ad quietem datus; non denique hæc sedes honoris, sella curulis, unquam vacuo mortis periculo, atque insidiis fuit." †

We seem almost able to infer from the sentiment here poured forth, the figure and countenance and demeanour of the great orator, patriot, and statesman, and also of the admiring and enraptured audience; in a mode analogous to that in which from the representation by Raphael of 'Paul Preaching at

* *Vide ante*, Chapter V. Sect. 5.

† The foregoing passage may be thus rendered in English:—

"Such a consul am I, O Conscript Fathers, that for me neither the forum, the very oracle of equity itself; nor the camp which has been rendered sacred by the consular auspices; nor the court of justice, which is the surest refuge of all nations; nor the private dwelling, which is our common asylum; nor the bed devoted to repose; nor, lastly, this seat of honour, the Curule throne;—hath ever been free from danger of assassination, and from treasonable plots."

Athens,' we infer the sentiments that he is delivering, owing to the manner in which the scene is described.

Although compositions in music partake of a certain individual character equally with the other arts, and are probably capable of exciting more feeling and passion than any of them, and of each kind; yet, in music, character and emotion can only be expressed either by the suggestions which it may serve to call forth, or by using it to accompany poetry, when its tones may be modulated according to the nature of the description, and may be grave and solemn, or lively and exhilarating, corresponding with the quality of the ideas to be produced. Association of ideas is the great principle by which, in music, either character or feeling can be represented.

There is no art, indeed, which so fully and so extensively admits of the exhibition of passion and feeling in all their various phases, from the simplest and mildest emotion to the most furious gusts of terror and anger, and hate and love, sa does music. And these throes it serves to describe with animation and with vigour; and it is also able efficiently to bring out, as it were, all the dark shadows by which their features are marked.

Architecture also admits very fully of a character being given to its compositions, and of much expression and feeling, if not of passion, being exhibited in its designs. There is, moreover, a very great, and indeed almost infinite variety of character in the different styles of architecture, and in the several edifices which are erected according to its principles. Castles, cathedrals, and palaces have each a peculiar and marked individual character of their own, which should be expressed in the style of their construction, and which corresponds with the purposes they are designed to serve. Solemn temples and courts of justice should, moreover, partake of the solidity and gravity of character which distinguishes the objects for which they were raised; while, on the other hand, villas and places of entertainment may in their style be more lively and light.

Regard should also be had in determining the character of an architectural edifice, not only to the actual object which the

building is intended to serve,* but also to the local position it is meant to occupy, both as regards the nature of the country about it, and also the buildings which stand round it. And as temples to the Creator should vary much in their character and expression from Halls of Commerce; so buildings which stand on plains or near rivers, should differ greatly from those erected on or near mountains, or in great cities.

Dramatic acting is not only capable of portraying character and passion of each kind; but character and passion constitute in reality the very soul of acting, and it is in the representation of them that acting essentially and principally consists. This art, indeed, even apart from the poetry and music and eloquence which contribute to its aid, is calculated, in the most powerful way to exhibit character of every variety, and also to move the passions, whose several developments and commotions it so perfectly depicts. The countenance should speak as well as the tongue, and the entire action of the frame second and enforce what the lips have urged. The tone and modulation of the voice are, moreover, often of nearly as much consequence as are the very words to which the voice gives utterance. The gestures of the body, including both the changes of the countenance and the motion of the limbs and figure, belong indeed exclusively to the province of acting, although of essential importance to aid the delivery of an effort in the art of eloquence. To be entirely effective, the action should be perfectly natural. It may thus aid to exhibit the thoughts, and to give force to the expressions of the soul.

In acting, the figure is perhaps of comparatively more consequence for the exhibition of character, beyond what it is in painting, because, in the first place, the distance from the audience will occasionally prevent the features of the actor from being closely observed; and, in the next place, as real motion is allowed to an actor, this may be of more importance to the figure than the face. Here, however, the voice, and the almost infinite variety of modulation and intonation of which the human voice is capable, amply atone for the features not being

* 'Civilization Considered as a Science,' p. 189.

clearly visible to the entire audience, and in fact shadow forth efficiently the nature of the representation.

Of all the arts, therefore, acting is that which is best adapted for the representation of human character and emotion. This is indeed its peculiar province. It constitutes at once its originating cause, and its final end. The character of the performance must, moreover, greatly depend on that of the actor, just as that of a composition in painting is more or less dependent on the character and cast of mind of the artist.

It appears to me, however, that in deducing the principles for the practical direction of this art, not only the actions of men, but those of animals also, when they are in a state of nature, and proceed freely and without restraint, and from their own innate impulses, afford very efficient guides for the regulation of action by the dramatic performer, and indeed in all those arts in which motion, or the representation of it, may be regarded as a main point. Homer especially, as we have seen, constantly compares the actions of heroes to those of animals.

Costume admits to a large extent of the display of character, and even of emotion. And, probably, in no art more than in costume does the exhibition of character and emotion require regulation. This may have reference alike to the rank, the occupation, the figure, the complexion, the disposition, and the age of the wearer; and it is applicable alike, and perhaps equally, to the dresses of persons of both sexes. With the climate, seasons, and nature of the country, the character of the costume will also necessarily vary.

Dress, indeed, is to a certain extent to the body what the body is to the soul, serving not only as a covering and a case to it, but also as an indication of what lies beneath the surface. As the body is in many respects indicative of the character of the soul, so is the clothing which we wear indicative of the character of the body; and so far as the body influences the soul, of the soul also. Perhaps, indeed, considering all the various modifications and variations of which costume is susceptible, it is as sure a reflection in certain very important respects of the character of the soul, as is even the conforma-

tion of the body itself. It evinces, moreover, not only the character of the individual, but the character of the times in which he lives, especially as regards its tastes and inclinations. Hence the connection between costume and human character, and nature generally;—that link which binds each art together, and which serves to unite them all in one common family.

In the national costume of each country, character is very fully displayed, although perhaps, rather that of the nation or of the age, than of the individual, is here exhibited, as whether it be martial or refined, barbarous or civilized. But probably, hardly any person is destitute of peculiar character in his style of dress.

Character is moreover displayed to a large extent in gardening, in a manner corresponding with what we see effected not only in epic, but in landscape painting, where scenery of a wild or a bold character, and which is calculated to excite corresponding emotions in the mind, is represented. The character here exhibited is not, however, that of human nature, but of landscape nature.

To a certain extent, indeed, the representation of passion and character through architecture, costume, and gardening, is accomplished as forcibly and as directly as it is by painting and sculpture; while painting and sculpture, on the other hand, are in reality but merely ideal, after all, in their mode of representing character. Thus, a picture, or a statue, does not, like a poem or an oration, describe a passion or an endowment, but only exhibits certain forms which are suggestive or typical of it, or may be supposed to conduce to its production. And architecture, costume, and gardening can each do as much as this in representing character emblematically.

In many respects, moreover, passion, as well as character, may be efficiently exhibited in landscape composition and scenery, and almost as fully as in the description of living beings; and it is to be borne in mind that in the portrayal of both, the representation is equally inanimate. Thus, through the effect of sunshine and clouds, especially where mountains

or water are the objects affected by them, and, particularly of storm and tempest, all the variety of passion, and its animation too, may be produced. The truth of this is beautifully and poetically confirmed and illustrated by Scriptural description, so perfect in this respect in all its allusions and sentiments, where the valleys are represented as smiling and full of joy,* the fields bursting out into songs of praise,† and inanimate creation generally exhibiting tokens of feeling.

> "Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in Thy name."‡

According as the glories of the sun, or the deep shadows of the clouds, gladden or obscure the face of nature, is its expression in the above respect characterized. Clouds especially, both as regards their forms and their tints, which may be diversified in an almost infinite variety of modes, admit of a corresponding diversity, and of a forcible display, of character of each kind. The skies of Turner may especially be appealed to as examples of the delineation of character, and almost of passion, in this branch of art. The clouds in his celebrated painting of 'The Old Temeraire,' may be particularly referred to here.

Hence it follows that in many respects, there is in reality, and essentially, as much character and feeling in scenery as there is in countenances, and among mountains as among mankind. There is, moreover, probably, as much both of sentiment and expression contained in rock, corresponding with its material structure, as there is in foliage, and in flowers. Thus granite, and marble, and slate have each their characteristic lines of form, which is also displayed in the winding of the veins, and the various tints of colour.

It might, perhaps, also be asserted, that there is nearly as much character and expression in the form of a mountain as in the features of a man. And although the posture of the mountain is always fixed and unalterable, yet there is an ever varying change as regards light and shade, and the different tints in the verdure which covers it; besides which there are the mu-

* Psalm lxv. † *Ibid.* ‡ Psalm lxxxix. vs. 13.

tations occasioned by season and weather, which are constantly occurring. Moreover, as regards mountains, the peculiarities of their shape, size, structure, colour, and height, are all alike available for affording the expression both of character and emotion in landscape scenery. Indeed, in the general representation of views of this description, and as a consequence also in landscape gardening, an extensive and varied expression, both of quality and feeling, and even of passion, may be conveyed. This, however, is mainly effected here by the excitement of emotions of a class which the artistic composition is calculated to call forth, such as those that are gay and grave, lively and sedate, exciting and soothing. The wild and savage, I might almost term them passionate rock scenes of Salvator Rosa, and the mild and smiling landscapes of Claude, afford a marked contrast to each other in this respect, which serves to exhibit very forcibly the peculiarity and variety of character and feeling inherent in or suggested by each.

There is, probably, no element in the composition of natural scenery which admits of so much character in its exhibition as does water. At one time mild and tranquil, and reflecting on its glassy surface all the objects around it; at another time foaming and raging furiously, whether in the torrent or in the tempest. At one period it is spread forth and lies in repose in an expansive lake; at another, it moves rapidly forward in a warbling rivulet; while occasionally it proceeds stately along in a majestic soft flowing river. In each of these phases, it exhibits a peculiar and specific character, and calls forth feelings corresponding with its condition.

There is also an infinite variety, and a remarkable individuality as regards the expression both of character and emotion conveyed by plants, which constitute another important element in landscape scenery. Not only flowers, but the ever varying foliage, and even the branches and trunks of trees, and the forms of the leaves afford proof of this fact; and each of these objects may serve to excite sensations corresponding with their character and their kind. Thus, some vegetable forms produce delight, others melancholy; some call forth exciting and others soothing emotions. Hence character and pas-

sion are as intimately associated with gardening and its constituent elements, as with any of the other arts.

That branch of the study of art, which has formed the subject of the present chapter, is the most important and interesting in its kind, and is also the most improving, and the best adapted for general pursuit. It is here that we may obtain the most varied and noble view of human nature in all its different workings, and under the greatest diversity of circumstances. While contemplating it by this means, we appear, as it were, to have ascended to a point of moral elevation, whence we may survey as through a telescope or as reflected in a camera, yet in the clearest and most comprehensive manner, the vast territory of man, and the display in full operation of the various characters, and principles, and passions by which he has been distinguished or animated. The foaming surge of intemperance and violence we may behold at a distance raging beneath our feet; while our attention to its operations will be undisturbed by any apprehensions we may entertain of injury to ourselves. New objects rise into view, and we obtain a prospect of scenes, and of enterprises, of which before we had no correct knowledge or conception, or which were concealed from our sight by the mazes which obscured them, and for want of some proper medium for observing them.

From the contemplation of this sublime prospect, from the consideration of this noble and glorious study, we may learn the most important and valuable moral lessons. It is hence that we are enabled to perceive the rocks and shoals on which so many have been cast away, and which, when on a level with them, they were unable to mark out and avoid. From hence also we are taught to observe the dangers and the miseries which unrestrained and lawless passions have produced in the world; and, on the other hand, the true dignity and real excellence of virtue, and the glorious rewards with which ultimately its actions have ever been crowned.

Independent, therefore, of the interest, the intellectuality, and the vast dignity which this branch of the study possesses, and which embraces in its wide sphere the grand theatre of human nature; from it alone we obtain an amount of practical

experience and of sound knowledge of the highest order; a species of wisdom, moreover, which no philosophy can so well inculcate,—no system of ethics so amply teach,—no principles of science, however skilfully or correctly framed, so perfectly or so efficiently supply.

CHAPTER XII.

IMAGINATION AND INVENTION IN ARTISTICAL REPRESENTATION.

I. HAVING considered in the preceding chapter the adaptation of art for the representation of human nature, and of nature generally; we have next to inquire into the efforts which it is capable of exerting in the realms of imagination and invention. Nor can it be doubted that the noblest of the soul's powers are those of origination. Through these it not only effects operations in regard to objects already existent, but of itself forms new beings altogether. It pursues here not merely the path along which other minds have proceeded before it, but in its capacity of creation it imitates the prerogative of its own divine Creator. Its sphere in this department, like eternity, is infinite. And the regions where it roams extend from the sublimest depths of earth and hell, to the loftiest realms of heaven.

It might, indeed, appear to many, upon a cursory view of the subject, and from the consideration of those mighty and astonishing works of imagination and invention which have been produced by some great geniuses, that the mind possessed a power of, as it were, thinking of, and becoming acquainted with things beyond its own experience, and of absolutely and entirely creating anew certain objects, without the aid of any elements out of which to form them, or of any previous knowledge of their nature.

Upon a close examination of this subject, it will, however, be obvious that the mind is endowed with no faculty or power

which can capacitate it to this extent; and that what appears on these occasions to have been an absolute new creation, is, in reality, but the composition, or union together in a different manner to what we have before observed, by the faculty which I have described,* of the old elements which contributed to the constitution of many objects familiar to us. As in the case of building, the same stones and materials which placed together in a particular order once formed a castle, may, by being re-united in a different mode, be made to construct a common dwelling, or any other building.

Hence, it will be obvious, upon a close and careful inquiry into the whole subject, that the faculty of origination consists in nothing more than in this power of compounding together different ideas belonging to various objects, so as to form a new one out of them, entirely dissimilar indeed to what had before existed; as in the ideas of a centaur, a dragon, or a sphinx, which are each mere creatures of the imagination, having been constituted by uniting together in one imaginary animal, ideas of the properties and characteristics of two or more very different species.

When phantoms of objects novel, and unnatural, and often exciting in their appearance, have been so conjured up, we are led to contemplate them with wonder and with awe. The mind becomes perplexed as to their reality and origin and nature; and thus the opinion is entertained that they are entirely new and original creations, and not mere combinations of the mind; and hence also arises that astonishment and perplexity with which they are regarded.

It appears, therefore, that this compounding together of ideas of different objects or beings into one, is the utmost effort of origination of which the mind is capable. Indeed, the correctness of what I have here contended will be but the more clearly evinced by a close examination of those prodigious and astonishing works of imagination which have most contributed to establish the opposite theory, and to lead many to consider that nothing less than the faculty of producing entirely new ideas out of original elements, or the gift of inspiration itself, could

* *Vide ante*, Chapter II. Sect. 7.

have enabled those who achieved them to have thus depicted them. Hence, the ideas of Satan, whose description by Milton I have extracted in a previous chapter,* and those of death,† might be obtained by collecting them from the qualities of other beings, and adding to them one of human shape, and by comparison magnifying him to superhuman stature. In the representations of them alluded to, we shall, indeed, find no single idea, or quality, which might not have been obtained or availed of in this manner.

Nor would I be supposed to consider this circumstance as in any way detracting from the genius, or the imaginative or inventive power of the great poet alluded to, who doubtless deserves to the full all the praise which has been bestowed upon him, and whom the more fully we study and understand, the more completely we shall admire, and the more entirely appreciate.

But the most satisfactory and conclusive proof that the mind can invent or imagine nothing absolutely original, arises from the fact that we can form no ideas of beings of which, from not possessing a knowledge of their qualities, we are unable to combine ideas from other subjects or objects. Thus in the case of the Deity, of whose form or appearance we know nothing, we are unable to give any description of Him that we can consider in any way just or adequate; all that has been attempted here has been effected by borrowing and combining ideas of other beings with which we are acquainted, so as to constitute one which was deemed to be so far as we could conjecture representative of Him.

Nor can we even create in our imagination any notions of a new animal, or new object in nature, except by effecting combinations of this kind. Thus the common idea of an angel is obtained by somewhat grossly uniting that of a bird, so far as regards its pinions at least, with that of a man. So also when we try to conjecture the idea of a spirit, we join together that of a shadow or a cloud with that of a man, and imagine a being something of the shape of the latter with the substance

* *Vide ante*, Chapter VIII. Sect. 3 and Sect. 9.

† *Vide* Sect. 12, *post*.

of the former. A person who had never seen a reptile or a fish or an insect, would gain no appropriate conception of either of them from a beast or a bird. There may possibly be many species of animals existing in nature, as in the planets, of which we can form no ideas, as they are entirely remote as regards their qualities, from any with which we are acquainted. If we try even to imagine a new sense, and some philosophers suppose we may be endowed with many such in a future state, we are at once bewildered in the attempt, and are only led to the effort by combining together some of the qualities of those we now possess. Not only, indeed, is every original idea or object formed in this manner by combinations together of ideas with which we are well acquainted; but we find that when a combination is attempted consisting of ideas of which we have not a clear and distinct notion or conception,—when as it were the mind appears to be making an effort to invent or conjure up ideas beyond its own experience,—such a combination fails effectively to strike the mind, owing to our being unable to obtain a proper notion of its nature, so that we are incompetent to travel the least beyond the verge which is prescribed to us by the limit placed to our intellectual powers, and which extends only to the perception of simple ideas, and the various combination of them together. An instance is afforded of the truth of this proposition by the sublime and highly imaginative description afforded in the sacred Scriptures of the vision of Ezekiel,* where a very wonderful and extraordinary account is given of certain supernatural appearances, but of which we are unable to obtain any clear notions, because the combinations of which it is made up are each beyond our knowledge and experience, and of which we are unfitted to form proper and adequate ideas.

We ought, in all cases, to possess the power of first imagining and conceiving in our minds, adequately and completely, if not distinctly and clearly, any great subject or scene, before we presume to depict it on canvas. Imagination must originate in, and spring from the mind of the artist itself. No example, and no imitation of others can direct him here. All such efforts

* Ezek. chap. i. vs. 4–25.

ought, moreover, to be not only free but infinite. They should not merely be unconstrained in their operation, but uncontrolled in the extent to which they wander. But although free and unfettered, they should be distinct on the one hand from the frantic visions of the madman; and on the other hand equally removed from the formal insipidity of the mind destitute of genius. The latter has no fire in its composition; the former is consumed by the fervency of its own fire. Nature should here be our guide; bold and wild and terrible as she sometimes appears, she is, nevertheless, ever sane, and even regular in her movements. Imagination, indeed, is not restrained, it is only guided by attending to, and by following the course of nature. Instead of running wild, its course is directed straight; its forces which were scattered, thus become concentrated. This power is, moreover, as vigorous and as active in old age as it is in youth. There is this great difference, however, that in the former it is controlled by reason, in the latter it is frequently uncontrolled. Perhaps fancy, which is an effort of origination extensively put forth in matters of a trivial and unimportant nature, is that which is most exercised in youth. Imagination, such as I have here considered it, is mainly exerted in mature, as also in advanced age.

An important question here arises in what originality, whether belonging to invention or imagination, really and actually consists; and, above all, in what cases the use of ideas or elements belonging to another deprives the artist of the merit of originality, or where he may claim to be still original. If he may avail himself of the inventions of others, or merely convert to his own use what he already finds prepared for him by nature, there appears but little occasion for resorting to originality. On the other hand, if availing himself of the ideas used by others, or of those which nature yields, deprives any one's ideas of originality, hardly any can lay claim to it, as these materials constitute as it were the raw commodity out of which the imaginative intellectual wares of all are formed. The true test and criterion to determine whether originality exists or not, whether ideas be dishonestly stolen or lawfully appropriated, appears, therefore, in reality to depend not on the borrowing, but on the

application of them. If the ideas in question are simply taken and transposed by the artist from the work of another, or from nature herself, without acknowledgment of the proprietorship, or without making any alteration or modification; the mere purloining of the ideas of another is all that is effected, and the person so using them is a pilferer and a copyist. But if, before applying them to his own use, he entirely remodels their form, or alters their position, or reconstructs their disposition, he is entitled to be considered an original composer, however much he may be indebted to the source from which he derived them. He is, in reality, in such a case under obligations not for his workmanship, but for his materials only. His was the machine which effected the work, while the quarry merely supplied the stone. In this sense Shakspeare and Milton, who borrowed largely to this extent from other poets, are entitled to be deemed original; because after having borrowed they so reconstructed their images and ideas as to make them their own. If the substance was taken from others, all the skill which was applied to it was theirs. Others may be destitute of originality whose ideas and images may be quite new, but whose mode of treating them is copied from those about them. In this, I repeat, consists the important distinction between feloniously stealing and fairly borrowing. Hence, some men, although they imitate others by obtaining ideas from them, recreate them anew and convert them to their own property by the original combinations which they effect. By the fire of their genius the old materials are melted down, and reappear in a new composition. We may fairly and honestly obtain the bricks from others, if the building we raise is of our own design. It is no derogation to the genius of Wren that he did not create the stones out of which St. Paul's is built, as well as erect that stupendous edifice. Nevertheless, not only in art, but in each pursuit of man, how little is original in comparison with what is copied. How much easier is it to imitate than to invent!

II. We have therefore next to inquire into the precise mode of operation of that faculty of the mind by which efforts of an imaginative kind are achieved, in the manner and to the extent alluded to.

The faculty of origination, which has already been described,* and through the exercise of which all new ideas are obtained, is exerted mainly in two different modes. 1. In invention, which consists in the construction of stories or narratives, or of designs and compositions in painting and the other arts. 2. In imagination, which consists in the original creation of objects or beings, or of the ideas of such objects or beings. In both cases, fresh combinations only are effected. But in the former case we construct only; while in the latter we actually create.

There is, therefore, an essential difference between the exercises of imagination and invention which ought to be clearly defined, and ever to be borne in mind. While imagination creates original objects which never existed before, invention merely brings together those which had before existed, but which had never been before amalgamated. The one unites ideas, and combines them into one; the other brings them together, but merely forms them into a collection of separate ideas. The descriptions of the one are original, of the other only new. All compositions which are not real representations, are efforts of invention; but those only which are absolutely original, are efforts of imagination.

Invention enables us aptly to narrate a story, or design a composition; imagination to create original objects and forms. By the one we arrange different subjects together in the most striking manner. By the other we so combine them as to form original beings out of them. The one merely places together, the other actually unites different ideas. The final aim and result of invention is new arrangement; that of imagination new creation. Invention applies to the manner of treating a subject, and the disposal of its parts; imagination, to the formation by combination of new characters and subjects of which it is to be composed. Invention superintends the disposition of the materials; imagination directs their combination. Reason mainly aids the former; taste the latter.

We speak of the invention, not of the imagination, of new styles of art, or orders of architecture, because here we do not

* *Vide ante*, Chapter II. Sect. 7.

create anything actually new; we merely dispose in a different manner things already in existence. Invention, indeed, is exercised as much about matters of science as those of art. Imagination is applicable to matters of art only. Invention is often exerted about topics that are within the province rather of reason than of genius, although the originative faculty is always the primary and active agent. Imagination is the province of genius only. In many cases, however, invention may be regarded as the incipient stage, while imagination is the ultimate effort in the process of origination.

III. The originative efforts of the mind, whether of imagination or invention, are effected in a twofold manner. 1. By means of operations which are performed through certain of the intellectual faculties. 2. By means of certain elements which are availed of as the materials for this purpose. The nature and mode of dealing with these elements will be inquired into in a subsequent section.*

(i.) As regards the operations of the mind which are employed in the process of imagination, and of invention also, these are of a twofold nature, the first of them consisting in the combination of ideas one with another. Through the instrumentality of this combination, ideas of different kinds are joined together and blended into one, forming by this means an original compound idea or object wholly different from either of those out of which it was constituted, and appearing to the mind as though an entirely and absolutely new creation had been effected, in its nature and properties in all respects varying from any of those which separately contribute to its constitution. Thus, in an analogous manner, in chemical science, water is compounded of certain gases or elements, each of which in its separate state has no apparent affinity or resemblance to the production which their union together serves to originate.

It is obviously of the very highest importance that the combinations which the mind makes for this purpose, and by which, as I observed in a preceding chapter,† all imaginative ideas are generated, should be carried out in a manner suitable to this end, and should, as far as requisite, be regulated by the prin-

* Sect. 7. † *Vide ante*, Chapter II. Sects. 4, 7.

ciples laid down with respect to artistical design and composition in general. Thus, the ideas which are so combined should be those only which would be naturally brought together and united in one object, and not such as we should never see in nature so conjoined. These ideas should also be such as will not only blend together, but such as will, as it were, melt down and amalgamate into one entire and single whole. Moreover, although the combinations which the imagination effects are all the result of art, yet nature should never be lost sight of in the mode of making them; and from her alone should all the materials for combination be drawn, which should, although combined, still appear as in their original state. The combinations should also be as natural as regards the mode of effecting this operation, as are the elements of combination themselves. Indeed, as already observed, all imaginative and inventive efforts in order to be sterling and durable, must be founded in nature. This is the only metal which will pass current in all ages and in all climes; and in the highest flights of the imagination, nature should be regarded as the ground on which we must eventually alight. This rule, moreover, holds good in invention as well as in imagination.

In framing a new object or idea by combinations of this kind, it should therefore be particularly borne in mind that the ideas selected for this purpose be such as are fitted to meet together, and to be united in one composition; that they be such as when so combined form a complete, and but one complete whole; and that by such combination be created an object or idea entirely new and original, instead of a mere modification or change of some of the former qualities of an object being effected, while such object remains essentially, and in all its most prominent and important characteristics the same as before. And the combinations thus made should be such as are possible, probable, and also natural. To the strict observance of this rule, it will be seen, when I come to illustrate the operation of imagination by appeal to efforts of this class whose power and whose daring have astonished the world, that the wondrous performances of Michael Angelo and Homer, and Dante and Milton, are mainly indebted for the success which they have achieved.

IV. The second of the intellectual operations to be performed in the exercise of imagination, is that of the comparison and association together of ideas. The exercise of invention can, however, but seldom be aided by this process, if, indeed, in any case, it is strictly available for this purpose.

As I have already remarked, the arts of painting and sculpture, as a means of describing nature and different transactions that may occur, claim a superiority in one respect over all the other arts, inasmuch as by bringing before the eye the actual representation of the object, they speak in a language which all persons of whatever nation or tongue, can understand. In like manner it may be observed, that there are certain subjects and circumstances which will create in the minds of all associations of ideas of a particular quality, whether allied to grandeur or beauty, although they may be neither transactions of great importance, nor objects of striking interest or excitement. In a painting, as also in a poem, we may therefore on some occasions with propriety introduce many things not necessarily connected with the event we represent, in order to add to its grandeur or effect; as in Homer and Milton we find many topics availed of for this purpose, which are otherwise irrelevant to the subject.

The comparison and association together of various objects and ideas is calculated in two different modes to add to the imaginative effect of the description. 1. By raising it through the comparisons and associations so introduced, and with which it is assimilated, when they are of a nature resembling and superior to it. 2. By affording a contrast between the description and the objects alluded to, when they are very dissimilar and inferior to it, and thus also adding much to the effect of the former. Sympathy, and also combination and association, belong, indeed, not to description and narration, or to the principles of design, as some writers have classed them, but they are employed entirely in imaginative processes. They are of little or no use in simple description or narration, and can be availed of only in original efforts.

It is requisite that the comparisons and associations so introduced be natural, and such also as are suitable to the subject

described, and not too far-fetched or remote in their kind. They should be also of a higher nature than the subject represented, at least so far as regards the particular quality of it alluded to, so as to raise it by the simile. Both Milton and Shakspeare, and also Homer and Virgil, in this respect are very skilful. The first of them, as we shall have occasion to observe in the illustrations of imaginative operation afforded in the following pages, considerably raises his highest imaginative descriptions by the apt and noble nature of the comparisons he institutes respecting them, and the associations he calls forth in the mind. Shakspeare, too, is very successful in this respect.

Although in an imaginative representation of any being in painting we cannot, as in poetry, introduce a simile to which it may be compared as is done by Milton when he compares Satan to a comet burning;* yet we may in the manner of effecting the representation give to it an air that may indirectly convey, or serve to suggest such an idea. The poet, indeed, does not actually say that Satan was a comet, or even that he looked like one; but that he "like a comet burn'd."

In some instances, however, the idea of a subject is raised, although the comparison instituted with regard to it is actually essentially inferior to it, provided that those qualities which in the immediate transaction before us would command most attention, are more abundant in the subject of comparison than in the original subject; or where the subject compared derives greatness or extent as regards itself from the association. Thus, when we are viewing the peaks of some stupendous mountain which towers high above those surrounding it, rearing its head into the clouds, and fancy that through the haze it resembles the form of some vast minster; our notions as to the dignity and grandeur and imaginative appearance of the mountain are exalted by the similitude, although it is compared to an object very inferior in extent. In Homer the comparison of a warrior to a lion much raises our idea of the warrior; not, however, because a lion is superior to a man, but because the qualities of courage and strength, so essential to

* 'Paradise Lost,' book ii. line 708.

a warrior, are found to a larger extent in a lion than in a man. So also Homer's comparison of Hector rushing to the battle, to a soaring eagle descending from the clouds to snatch a hare or lamb,* contributes greatly to the imaginative effect of the description from the extensive power of action which the eagle possesses. On the other hand, the comparison of the brightness of Achilles' spear to the star Hesperus, the brightest star in Heaven,† directly exalts the description, from the association created being far nobler than the original object.

In the description by Homer of the contest between Hector and the two Ajaxes over the body of Patroclus,‡ the action of each of the heroes is exceedingly fine and effective and imaginative, both as regards the movements which they make, and the attitudes they assume, as also the fierce passions by which they are agitated. But the comparisons instituted are what mainly contribute to the imaginative power of the scene. Hector is here assimilated, first as regards his fury, to a raging flame; and next, as regards his courage and firmness, to a hungry lion over a carcass, undaunted by the efforts of the shepherds to drive him away. Homer's comparison of Achilles advancing through the ranks of the battle-field, to a furious fire blazing through a dry forest, which the wind agitates, and impels on all sides in its impetuosity,§ is also very sublime and imaginative, as the quotation of the passage will serve to show:—

> "As when a flame the winding valley fills,
> And runs on crackling shrubs between the hills;
> Then o'er the stubble up the mountain flies,
> Fires the high woods, and blazes to the skies,
> This way and that the spreading torrent roars;
> So sweeps the hero through the wasted shores."

The representation by the same great poet of Achilles armed,‖ is also one of great splendour, and of considerable imagina-

* 'Iliad,' book xxii. lines 305–310.
† *Ibid.* book xxii. lines 317–321.
‡ *Ibid.* book xviii. lines 153–164.
§ *Ibid.* book xx. lines 490–494.
‖ *Ibid.* book xix. lines 357–387.

tive power; and the glorious appearance of the armour which he wears, is particularly set forth His helmet is compared to a star, his shield to the moon, and the magnificence of the picture is much heightened by the comparison of the effect of the refulgence from his shield against the sky, to the reflection at sea from a blazing fire on a mountain. His flashing eyes are assimilated to a flame, and he is described as much agitated by passion, which adds considerably to the effect of the representation.

As regards the effect of comparison in giving vigour to the description of a vast multitude, this is very successfully attained by Homer, and great magnificence is conferred on the representation by comparing the number of helmets leaving the Grecian ships to thick flakes of snow falling down from heaven.* The account also of the Trojan forces, with their numerous fires at night, blazing before Ilium, the ships and chariots and horses being seen near,† is much heightened by the comparisons with which it is introduced to the stars in heaven round the clear moon in a fine night, when all the groves and mountains are illumined, and all the planets are visible:—

"As when the moon, refulgent lamp of night!
O'er heaven's clear azure spreads her sacred light,
When not a breath disturbs the deep serene,
And not a cloud o'ercasts the solemn scene;
Around her throne the vivid planets roll,
And stars unnumber'd gild the glowing pole,
O'er the dark trees a yellow verdure shed,
And tip with silver every mountain's head;
Then shine the vales, the rocks in prospect rise,
A flood of glory bursts from all the skies:
The conscious swains, rejoicing in the sight,
Eye the blue vault, and bless the useful light.
So many flames before proud Ilion blaze,
And brighten glimmering Xanthus with their rays:
The long reflections of the distant fires
Gleam on the walls, and tremble on the spires.

* 'Iliad,' book xix. lines 357–360.
† *Ibid.* book viii. lines 551–561.

A thousand piles the dusky horror gild,
And shoot a shady lustre o'er the field,
Full fifty guards each flaming pile attend,
Whose number'd arms, by fits, thick flashes send,
Loud neigh the coursers o'er their heaps of corn,
And ardent warriors wait the rising morn."

Dante as regards his imaginative power, and his mode of attempting efforts of this kind, is, in general, far inferior to both Milton and Homer, and also to Virgil and Shakspeare. His comparisons, and also his ideas, are frequently but mean and vulgar and trivial, and in many cases are too material and sensual,—a fault which is seldom to be discerned in either Homer or Milton. The comparison by Dante of the doomed sinners in the fiery lake, more especially as regards their action, to frogs in a moat,* is, nevertheless, very effective, and greatly heightens the imaginative force of the description, although the metaphor itself is considerably in every respect less dignified than the original object:—

"E'en as the frogs, that of a watery moat
Stand at the brink, with the jaws only out,
Their feet and of the trunk all else conceal'd,
Thus on each part the sinners stood; but soon
As Barbariccia was at hand, so they
Drew back under the wave."

The following account of the spirits shrined in ice, and the comparison of their notes to those of the stork,† is also very striking, and highly imaginative:—

"Blue pinch'd and shrined in ice the spirits stood,
Moving their teeth in shrill note like the stork.
His face each downward held; their mouth the cold,
Their eyes express'd the dolour of their heart."

V. I have already adverted‡ to the influence which taste, and the other faculties and powers and endowments of the

* 'Inferno,' canto 22, lines 26–31.
† *Ibid.* canto 32, lines 34–37.
‡ *Vide ante*, Chapter II. Sect. 4.

mind, exercise on its different operations. Imagination is in an equal and a corresponding manner thus affected, both as to its extent and its mode of acting. As already observed, each of the different faculties and capacities of the mind aid the other, and they do so in almost every operation which the mind performs, in the same way as the different members of the body, although varying from each other as to their nature and end, either directly or indirectly assist one another in most of their efforts. Thus, the reason aids the imagination, and the imagination often assists the reason; and the faculty by which we receive ideas, aids them both. Taste too aids both the imagination and the reason. In each of these cases the faculty or capacity peculiarly adapted to effect the effort in question, is that which takes the lead in accomplishing it, while the others only assist and direct it in its career. Thus reason aids imagination in two opposite modes. 1. By directing and pointing out suitable exercises of this power. 2. By correcting its operations, and preventing it from running into extravagance. Hence the result of the aid, and of the action of the reason is not to weaken, but to add force to the efforts of imagination. It directs them to a proper aim, instead of suffering them to shoot at random. As regards its influence on the imaginative operations, reason is indeed the exact counterpart of passion. In the exercise of imagination, while passion acts as a sail, reason serves as a rudder to prevent the mind from running into extravagance. Hence, the province of reason in efforts of an imaginative kind, although its sphere may be apparently very humble and only subordinate, is nevertheless highly important, and even indispensable. The helmsman who stands at the rear of the vessel, has no claim to the merit of helping it forward, of assisting in its machinery to propel it through the waves, or of aiding to turn the sails so as to catch the breeze which urges it onward along the watery road; yet it is by the rudder that its progress is kept straight, and by means of which rocks and shoals are avoided, the slightest collision with which would not only arrest its career, but even plunge it beneath the waves, and involve it in instant ruin.

But although reason is frequently exercised in the earlier

stages of the operation of imagination, and will then point out the extravagances into which we are running, and thus, to a certain extent occasionally impede the imaginative process; yet when, by the excitement of the various passions and emotions a certain amount of obscurity is thrown over the whole design, so that its mechanism is as it were veiled from our scrutiny, and we lose sight of the mode in which the object before us was constructed, our feelings impel us irresistibly forward in spite of the remonstrances of reason, until at length the very reason itself becomes dragged along by the current, and, like a tree torn up and driven down a torrent, it adds fury to the stream instead of aiding to restrain its impetuosity.

VI. The province of the passions in imaginative effort is very important, and is the more extensive on account of the power and energy characteristic of all their operations. Whether roused by some real object or transaction which serves directly to excite them, or by indirect but hardly less forcible appeals to them through the operation of the imagination, and the phantasms which it conjures up, and presents as real appearances; they fiercely rush forth in full force, stirring up the mind from its profoundest depths, and like the sudden burst of a tempest on the surface of the ocean, they rouse every dormant energy into full and active operation, and let loose all the powers of the soul, which now roar and foam in unrestrained freedom, whereby the wildest excesses are achieved, which in the peaceful and ordinary calm of life could never have been contemplated.

The passions are, indeed, quite as valuable as auxiliaries, but as auxiliaries only, in the exercise of imaginative efforts, as is the reason, although they require to be kept in due bounds, and to be restrained in their proper and appointed province. Moreover, the excitement of the passions, as I have already observed, contributes much to raise the mind to a state peculiarly fitted for the wanderings of the imagination.

Passion also greatly aids the efforts of imagination, by magnifying in the mental vision the appearance of the different phantasms which the mind conjures up or creates, and by giving vigour to the exercises of origination. Passion affects the ima-

gination of the artist to the same extent, or in a corresponding manner with that in which imaginative effort in the composition affects the passions of the beholder. The passions give force and energy to the efforts of imagination, and stimulate them on to bold exertion. They loosen the bonds which reason imposes. We see objects as through a mist when enveloped in passion, which not only unnaturally distorts them, but magnifies them into monsters. Not only passion, but the height of enthusiasm and even frenzy have been occasionally availed of to aid and invigorate the operations of imagination.

Moreover, as in society, we may observe that the excitement of any particular passions or feelings in one man will by sympathy have the effect of calling forth corresponding emotions in those around him; so in works of art, the representation or description of the excitement of violent passions will, by sympathy, call forth corresponding feelings in those who gaze upon these transcripts of nature. This sympathy, excited by the representation of passion, is evoked by terror, and more or less by anger also; so that whenever we see the passion vehemently exhibited in an artistical composition, we catch a sort of infection from it, and our own feelings are correspondingly roused.

There seems, therefore, to be a peculiar and a close alliance between imagination and passion, especially as regards terror, and in some cases with respect to anger. Love aids invention rather than imagination. Passion, generally, however, not only agitates but liberates the mind. It sets it at work, and frees it from the restraints of reason and reflection; and also urges it on and induces it to wander in those wilds where imagination delights to roam and to disport itself. Indeed, in every originative effort, there is more or less of passion, and of the wildness which it produces; and without some passion being infused into it, it is hardly possible that any composition should partake extensively of this character.

In the preceding section, while inquiring into the influence of reason upon originative efforts, the influence of passion was adverted to; and the result of this influence will be fully illustrated during the examination of the several elements of ori-

gination in the section that follows, which therefore renders unnecessary any discussion of this subject at length in the present section.

VII. Having already endeavoured to demonstrate that the various originative efforts of the mind are respectively exercised through the operation of the faculties which have been described, the question next arises as to what are the actual materials upon which imagination is exerted, and what are the leading elements which serve for efforts and creations of this kind?

(ii.) The following appear to me to be the principal and essential elements which are made use of in the exercise of imagination, and the endowment of any subject or object with which serves to conduce mainly to its imaginative effect:—1. The idea of obscurity. 2. That of the possession of power. 3. That of the possession of energy. 4. That of novelty. 5. That of the possession of vastness. 6. That of supernaturality. 7. That of dignity. 8. That of the possession of the quality of noxiousness. 9. That of the possession of the quality of divineness.

Each of these elements, like those of delineation and of the picturesque, are characterized by the particular qualities and powers appertaining to them, as whether active or passive, originating or merely derivative; whether independent by themselves, or merely auxiliary to certain others; and also whether essential or dispensable in the constitution of the property to which they contribute.

These several elements will now be examined and analysed separately in their order.

(1.) By the element of obscurity, I mean such a degree of mystery or uncertainty that the nature of the being described, or the object represented, is but dimly to be discerned, and its whole character is but faintly perceivable. Obscurity is also an important element of imagination, because from its excitement of perplexity it conduces to fear. All our emotions of terror are more or less connected with obscurity, which at once sets the imagination at work to discover a new path, in order that the mind may extricate itself from the maze in which it is bewildered.

This element is passive as regards its operation, but in its nature originating. It is also independent in itself, and acts in a direct manner in the promotion of imaginative effects, for which, however, although very important, it is not in every case absolutely essential.

In some branches of artistical composition, nevertheless, definity in the description is absolutely necessary, as in the representation of form by sculpture, where everything is substantial and real, and nothing can be left uncertain, or for conjecture to supply. This is not always essential in painting, where on some occasions parts may be obscure, as by being thrown into a dense shade, when nothing but a general outline of the form of the object is rendered visible; or in the case of mere rough sketches, to which I have before alluded, where a few lines serve to create a general conception of the design, and set the mind at work to fill up the details and complete the composition. Indeed, darkness of itself seems to have a natural tendency to excite the imagination to activity. All our ideas of ghosts and goblins and supernatural beings, were generated in the dark, and obscurity is inseparably associated with them.

In poetry the introduction of this important element of imaginative description, may be availed of to a still greater extent. Here a mere vague obscure representation of some subjects may be far from inefficient, and what is wanting to complete the description may be more than supplied by the imagination being set at work by apt inferences and associations to form the most original conceptions, and fill up the design.

Infinity and obscurity, so far as they both lead the mind to wander forth into the vast unlimited expanse of imaginative effort, and to conjure up new objects of wonder and curiosity, are closely allied to each other. Our notions of the Deity, which are mainly derived from what we hear of His attributes, are greatly heightened by our endless conjectures and dark speculations concerning Him.

The imaginative effect of obscurity in description is very finely and powerfully illustrated by the following quotation from the Book of Job,* representing the appearance of a spirit:—

* Chapter iv. vs. 13-17.

"In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men,
Fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake.
Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up.
It stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof:
An image was before mine eyes; there was silence, and I heard a voice—
Shall mortal man be more just than God?"

In music great scope is allowed to the range of the imagination, from the obscurity and indefiniteness which are, indeed, almost inseparable from descriptions in this art.

Architecture, to a very limited, if to any extent, admits of the introduction of this element into its compositions. In costume it may be availed of so far as regards the colour of the materials, as in the case of certain armour, and in mourning dresses. In gardening it is effected through the gloomy shades and thick gloom which are produced by the particular disposition of the grounds, and by the introduction of trees or plants of this character, or the overhanging of rocks or steep banks. Some of the most imaginative poetical descriptions are those of dark and obscure scenes in the recesses of dense forests.

(2.) By the element of power is meant the possession of such a degree of strength or capacity of some kind, as is sufficient to accomplish certain great and important results connected with the transaction under consideration. No subject or object wholly devoid of power can be highly imaginative in its nature. Weakness is, probably, the surest foil to imaginative effort that can exist.

This element is active as regards its operation, and originating in its nature. It is, as regards its effect, independent of any other element, and operates in a direct manner, and is indispensable in the constitution of any representation or description which is highly imaginative.

The attribution to any being or object of powers or capacities of a vast or important nature, has a great effect in raising the imagination, and of exciting ideas in the mind concerning it corresponding with those qualities or powers. In the quotations which in some of the succeeding pages are given from Milton, it will be observed how prodigiously he has heightened

the imaginative description of the supernatural beings he has introduced, by the attribution to them in an extraordinary degree of the qualities and powers of vast strength and magnitude and courage and prowess.

In the following passage from Isaiah,* a very sublime, imaginative, and effective description is afforded of the Deity, not by any representation of his personal appearance or form, but by conveying to us ideas of the stupendous and amazing qualities and attributes with which he is endowed :—

"Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand?
And meted out heaven with the span,
And comprehended the dust of the earth in measure,
And weighed the mountains in scales,
And the hills in a balance?
. . . . . .
Behold the nations are as a drop of a bucket,
And are counted as the small dust of the balance:
Behold He taketh up the isles as a very little thing.
. . . . . .
It is He that sitteth upon the circle of the earth,
And the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers;
That stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain,
And spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in."

An extremely noble and imaginative account of the attributes of the Deity is contained in the following quotation from one of the Psalms,† especially as regards His omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience; and by a reference to which we are led to imbibe ideas of His general capacity and majesty :—

"Whither shall I go from Thy spirit?
Or whither shall I flee from Thy presence?
If I climb up into Heaven Thou art there;
If I go down to Hell Thou art there also.
If I take the wings of the morning, and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea;
Even there also shall Thy hand lead me,
And Thy right hand shall hold me.
If I say peradventure the darkness shall cover me,
Then shall my night be turned to day;
Yea the darkness is no darkness with Thee,
But the night is as clear as the day,
The darkness and light to Thee are both alike."

* Chapter xl. vs. 12–22. † Psalm cxxxix. vs. 7–12.

The following description of the Almighty is contained in another Psalm,* which, from the observance of the principle to which I have before referred, affords perhaps the loftiest and most effective and striking representation of the presence of the Deity that is anywhere to be found :—

"The earth trembled and quaked;
The very foundation also of the hills shook, and were removed,
Because he was wroth.
There went a smoke out in His presence,
And a consuming fire out of His mouth,
So that coals were kindled at it.
He bowed the heavens also, and came down,
And it was dark under His feet.
He rode upon the cherubims, and did fly;
He came flying upon the wings of the wind.
He made darkness His secret place;
His pavilion round about Him with dark water,
And thick clouds to cover Him."

Here the ideas of amazing power, of obscurity, of energy, of dignity, and of supernatural manifestations in the person of the Divinity Himself, all combine together, and conduce to the extraordinary imaginative effect of the representation.

The account of the attributes of the Almighty, which is contained in the Book of Job,† is one of transcendent imaginary power. Here the combination together of many sublime and terrible images, the obscurity with which the whole is invested, and the introduction of the supernatural, are the main elements which conduce to its effect. But the principal and leading one of all is the idea of the qualities of vast strength and might which the description affords, and with the attribution of which it winds up. Great grandeur is also infused into the representation :—

"To whom hast Thou uttered words?
And whose spirit came from Thee?
Dead things are formed under the waters, and the inhabitants thereof.
Hell is naked before Him,
And destruction hath no covering.
He stretcheth out the north over the empty place,
And hangeth the earth upon nothing,

* Psalm xviii. vs. 7–11. † Chap. xxvi. vs. 4–14.

He bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds,
And the cloud is not rent under them,
He holdeth back the face of His throne,
And spreadeth His cloud upon it.
He hath compassed the waters with bounds,
Until the day and night come to an end.
The pillars of heaven tremble,
And are astonished at his reproof.
He divideth the sea with his power,
And by His understanding he smiteth through the proud.
By His spirit He hath garnished the heavens ;
His hand hath formed the crooked serpent.
Lo, these are parts of His ways : but how little a portion is heard of Him?
But the thunder of His power who can understand?"

(3.) By the element of energy is here meant the putting fully into force the power that is possessed. Any being may be endowed with great strength, but unless this is actually exercised, and some demonstration of its reality is thus afforded, its effect on the mind is lost.

This element is active as regards its operation and originating in its nature; but it is rather auxiliary to power than independent of any other elements. Its effect is direct, and it is essential as an element in the constitution of imaginative efforts.

Milton's Satan, in the descriptions of him already quoted,* is distinguished as much for his energy and the vast extent of this quality, as for his power; and to this they owe a large share of their imaginative effect. In the case of any animated being, our imagination is at once stimulated by an idea of its energy. In this respect, however, the present element is mainly to be regarded as united with, and lending force to the preceding one of power, so that the observations already made respecting that element, are, to a large extent, applicable to the present one also. Energy is, in fact, but the active exertion of the quality of power possessed by any subject.

(4.) By the element of novelty, is here meant the possession of such a new and unaccustomed unknown character, as causes

* *Vide ante*, Vol. I., Chapter VIII. Sect. 3, pp. 280, 281.

us to be wholly unacquainted with the nature of the subject or object presented. This is, indeed, not only a leading, but an essential element of imagination. Without it, all efforts of this kind would be lifeless and inefficient.

Novelty is consequently absolutely indispensable as an element here; but in its operation it is passive. In its nature it is originating; and it is independent of any other element, and direct in its effect.

In Virgil's account of the infernal regions in the sixth book of the 'Æneid,' and in Milton's descriptions in 'Paradise Lost,' the imaginative effect is much heightened by the novelty of the scenes presented. Novelty, indeed, materially excites our imagination, as being unaccustomed and strange to the mind; and in fact of itself renders a subject to a certain degree imaginative. But when this element is united with those of obscurity power and energy, its imaginative quality and force are greatly increased.

(5.) The element of vastness comprehends greatness of dimension above the common order, in any subject or object. This is essential in imaginative efforts to raise the mind to any extent, which expands correspondingly with the subject of its contemplation.

In its operation, however, it is but passive, and in its nature derivative only, and it is merely auxiliary to other elements, while its effect as regards the influence which it produces is quite direct.

How greatly is the imagination raised in the description of the Deity contained in the quotations from the Psalms in the present chapter, by the quality of vastness which is attributed to Him! Vastness, however, like energy, may be regarded mainly as an appendage to and an acceleration of power, and as operating in the same way as an element of imagination; so that most of the remarks applied to power, are to a large extent appropriate to vastness also.

(6.) The element of supernaturality implies a character in any particular subject, whether as regards its constitution or its qualities, which is not regulated by, or confined to the known laws of nature. The notion of an object being supernatural,

like that of its being novel, serves at once to set the imagination at work.

In its operation this element must accordingly be deemed to be active, and in its nature it is originating. It is independent of any other element, and direct in its effect, but is not absolutely essential. Nevertheless, nothing tends so much to aid, and to give freedom and vigour to the imagination, as endowing the being who is the subject of it with attributes which are beyond and additional to those which are within the ordinary laws of nature. Milton's 'Satan,' and Michael Angelo's 'Last Judgment,' owe to this the main share of their imaginative power. This is therefore a leading element of imagination. The general use of and resort to the supernatural, have been fully discussed in a separate section of the present chapter,* and many of the observations there used with regard to that subject are applicable here.

(7.) Dignity, which is also an element of grandeur, and has already been defined as such,† is essential as a collateral element in every subject of an imaginative character in order to endow it with that importance which it should possess. The idea of meanness or lowness at once damps and utterly destroys all imaginative effect in any object, while dignity forthwith raises and ennobles the mind to a degree adapted for imaginative efforts.

This element, as regards its operation, is passive, and it is derivative in its nature. It is rather auxiliary to other elements than independent by itself. In its effect it is direct, but it is not absolutely essential and indispensable.

Dignity as an element of imagination is closely allied to power and vastness, contributing with them to throw an air of grandeur over the subjects in which they are inherent, whereby the operation of the imagination is extensively aided, inasmuch as few subjects can be highly imaginative, without possessing some or more of the elements of grandeur.

(8.) The idea of noxiousness, by which is meant the power and the disposition of any being to inflict injury on other

* *Vide post*, Sect. 9.

† *Vide ante*, Chapter VII. Sect. 4; Chapter VIII. Sect. 2.

beings, seems to be more or less associated with every great subject of imaginative effort, as its entire harmlessness appears quite to destroy its capacity of this character, and consequent effect on the mind.

This element is active as regards its operation, and originating in its nature. It is independent of the other elements, and in its effect direct, but it is not indispensable.

The imaginative effect of Satan's description by Milton, is vastly raised by the notion afforded of his power and disposition to injure and destroy. Hence he becomes terrible as well as grand. Spirits owe much of their imaginative energy to this circumstance. So also in Dante,* the following description of a forest which is so graphically and powerfully given, is much aided in effect by representing it of a dusky hue, and by the heaviness, deformity, and denseness of the boughs; but more especially by the barren and venomous nature of its productions, and of the animals who make this place their retreat.

> "We enter'd on a forest, where no track
> Of steps had worn a way. Not verdant there
> The foliage, but of dusky hue; not light
> The boughs and tapering, but with knares deform'd
> And matted thick: fruits there were none, but thorns
> Instead, with venom fill'd. Less sharp than these,
> Less intricate the brakes, wherein abide
> Those animals that hate the cultured fields,
> Betwixt Corneto and Cecina's stream."

The idea of noxiousness also contributes essentially to aid the operation of the imagination by the excitement of fear which it directly occasions, conducing indeed more powerfully to this than any other subject.

(9.) The notion of divineness in any imaginative subject, by which is meant the affinity or resemblance of any object or being to the Divine nature, either as regards its origin its character or the quality of its action, greatly heightens its effect and ennobles its nature, and is more or less essential to every great effort of this kind, inasmuch as the Divinity is the

* 'Inferno,' canto 13, lines 2–10.

source of all greatness and power throughout the universe. Every extensively imaginative description has consequently an air of divineness cast over it, and the subject of it is supposed to originate in the operation of the Author of the universe, the highest ultimate object of every imaginative effort. Divineness as regards imaginative subjects may be said to be allied to the supernatural, and to dignity also, as whatever is Divine partakes extensively of both these qualities. But divineness includes in its nature a sublimity far superior to anything in either of the former elements.

As regards its operation this element is passive, but in its nature it is originating. It is independent of all the other elements, and in its effect it is direct. But it is not absolutely essential in the constitution of imaginative description or representation.

VIII. A very large portion of the imaginative efforts which are achieved in either branch of the arts, is, as already observed, effected mainly by exciting in the mind associations of ideas connected with the subject. But there is also another very important means employed in compositions of this character, more especially those of an imaginative description, consisting in leading on the mind by making suggestions to it of different kinds, which may be done to an infinite extent, to draw certain inferences as to the existence and nature of other things not developed. Hence the imagination is set to wander forth in a particular track, being here and there urged on by objects calculated to call forth striking ideas. An illustration of this principle or mode of operation is afforded by landscape scenery. Thus, distant mountains, when from their faint mystical appearance they seem almost unearthly, especially when from their height they tower into the heavens and are capped with clouds, above all, when their peaks are crowned and are radiant with snows that never melt; are nearly allied to, if not strictly within the sphere of the imaginative in scenery, and are at any rate highly calculated to excite our imagination, and to call forth in the mind ideas of that quality, by the suggestions which they afford as to the sublime and stupendous nature of the objects in view. Their indistinctness

and indefinite appearance, the extraordinary nature of the sight, and their vast size, are what mainly contribute to endow them with this quality.

Hence also it is that a rough unfinished sketch of any very imaginative scene, will frequently prove more effective than a highly finished painting, because while it serves fully to direct the mind in a track for imagining the scene represented, which is here as it were but hinted at by leading suggestive points as to its general nature and end; it is left to the imagination to complete the enterprise in question, by means of new associations exciting suitable topics for this purpose; while on the other hand it places no bounds to, and imposes no restraint on the imaginative ranges and wanderings of the mind. Among the poets Shakspeare is eminently successful in the use of suggestion, and by a few bold and well-directed expressions contrives to set the mind at work, and to produce a current of thought which almost inevitably leads on to the production of the ideas sought to be excited. Milton, too, in his highest flights,—those imaginative scenes which are beyond the province of direct distinct description, as in his portrayal of death and hell,—by a few mysterious hints impels the imagination, and urges it forward and upward in its sublime flight. A very fine illustration of Shakspeare's skill in efforts of this kind, is afforded by the following quotation from his 'Measure for Measure,' in the description of death, which is exceedingly forcible, and which is entirely obtained by leading the mind on by certain inferences to ideas of various kinds. The account here given by Claudio of the vague uncertainty and terror with which he contemplates the future unknown mysterious state of being, is most powerful, and moving, and, indeed, harrowing. It is the finest specimen of suggestion infinite in description, where all the main points are left to the imagination to supply.

> "Ay, but to die, and go we know not where;
> To lie in cold obstruction, and to rot;
> This sensible warm emotion to become
> A kneaded clod; and the delighted spirit
> To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside

In thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice;
To be imprison'd in the viewless winds,
And blown with restless violence round about
The pendent world; or to be worst than worst
Of those, that lawless and uncertain thoughts
Imagine howling!—'tis too horrible!
The weariest and most loathed worldly life,
That age, ache, penury and imprisonment
Can lay on nature, is a paradise
To what we fear of death."*

The extract which follows from the same great writer may, however, be deemed defective, owing to its not adhering to the principles to which I have alluded, and from attempting to describe minutely objects and circumstances which do not admit of this effort, but which are merely to be inferred, and can be supplied in this mode only to the imagination. The description is certainly in many respects very imaginative, but it is too fanciful; the comparisons and ideas used as illustrations are too commonplace, too ordinary, to set off so visionary and unreal a scene as this. The materials are, moreover, too gross and familiar. The representations are also too minute, and too much in detail, and blanks are filled up which the imagination should have been left to supply. It is the speech of Mercutio in 'Romeo and Juliet.'†

"Oh, then I see Queen Mab hath been with you
She is the fairies' midwife; and she comes
In shape no bigger than an agate stone,
On the forefinger of an alderman;
Drawn with a team of little atomies
Athwart men's noses as they lie asleep:
Her waggon-spokes made of long spinners' legs;
The cover, of the wings of grasshoppers;
The traces, of the smallest spider's web;
The collars, of the moonshine's watery beams:
Her wip, of crickets' bone; the lash, of film:
Her waggoner, a small grey-coated gnat,
Not half so big as a round little worm

* Act iii. scene 1. † Act i. scene 4.

Prick'd from the lazy finger of a maid:
Her chariot is an empty hazel-nut,
Made by the joiner squirrel, or old grub,
Time out of mind the fairies' coach-makers."

In the following very beautiful and imaginative description by Dante,* of an approaching angel, much is left for inference and suggestion; and to which, as also to its very vagueness and indistinctness, it mainly owes its efficiency:—

"The goodly shape approach'd us, snowy white
In vesture, and with visage casting streams
Of tremulous lustre like the matin star,
His arms he open'd then his wings; and spake."

Painters will sometimes cause the personages they represent to hide their faces, where the expression they should possess is beyond what they are able to effect. But this is but an acknowledgment of incapacity to accomplish the most important part of the design which they have undertaken.

A large portion of the ideas called forth in each representation by either art are in reality conveyed by suggestion. The province of suggestion has, indeed, a far wider range than that of description or imitation, inasmuch as all subjects of whatever kind are capable of being suggested, while but a limited number only admit of direct imitation or representation.

It is, in fact, even in painting, only the most finished and perfect efforts that effect the representation otherwise than by creating associations of ideas with the subject, and by exciting the same ideas in the mind as an actual view of the transaction itself would do.

Sculpture effects its object rather by suggestion than by direct representation; and poetry and eloquence do so almost entirely. Music is eminently suggestive in its nature, as are also architecture and costume as regards the designs in them. In acting, too, much may be suggested which cannot be exhibited; and even in designs in landscape gardening, by a skilful arrangement suggestions may be afforded, more especially as to space, and the extension of objects concealed from our view.

* 'Purgatorio,' canto 12, lines 81–84.

Hence, the more ideal any art is, the better is it fitted for imaginative representation; and the more imitative it is, the less is it adapted for this end. Moreover, the more imaginative any effort is, the more should be allowed to the imagination to supply by leaving the design imperfect. The mind, when once excited and directed in the path which leads to the imaginative, will of itself effect far more than the art of the painter or poet can ordinarily do by exact description, unless his power be very great indeed. But even in this instance, he will do well to leave much to the imagination of each individual to fill up the details of the picture, as is the case in that powerful description of a spirit in the Book of Job, already quoted in this chapter. Milton, on the other hand, has perhaps sometimes failed here by describing too definitely what ought to be left obscure and incomplete.

The suggestions excited must of course be of the same nature as the elements which conduce to the imaginative, and should serve to supply such portion of them as is not directly contributed. Much, indeed, may be suggested,—and if aptly done with great effect too,—which cannot be described.

If, as not unfrequently happens, the imagination of the spectator is more powerful than that of the painter, by leaving ideas to be suggested the artist allows latitude to the imagination of the former which he has impelled into action in a proper direction. If he leaves nothing to be suggested, he confines the spectator's imagination to his own narrow limits. As has already been remarked, slight sketches and engravings are sometimes, especially in imaginative compositions, of more value than finished paintings, because they admit of so much being suggested, while the latter allow no scope for this purpose.

Many objects owe their effect and beauty to the ideas which they serve to suggest, possessing in themselves but little to move us. Thus the representation of a human figure under intense emotion may in itself, in certain instances, be less pleasing than one in repose; but the ideas suggested by the former of anguish or passion, render it far more exciting than the other. Hence also the representation of a dead body may be

more striking than that of a live one, full of vigour, and in the intensity of action, on account of the suggestions which it calls forth.

The suggestion of ideas by which our mind is referred to some object or quality not actually existent in the one before us, has a powerful influence in determining the direction both of our mental operations and our emotions, in the case alike of works of nature and those of art. We are influenced on observing the countenance of a man by the ideas of virtue or talent suggested; and on viewing a building or a statue, by a consideration of the uses to which the one is appropriated, or of the individual which the other represents. Many works of art depend entirely, indeed, on the ideas they serve to suggest, not on those they directly call forth. Such ideas are to them their very soul. The work itself is but the body or frame for the intellectual principle or being. To suggestion of this nature there is, indeed, no limit. It is as infinite in its efforts as is the range of imagination itself.

IX. It appears to me, however, that in all the active imaginative efforts which the mind is capable of exerting, that on which we mainly depend for success of the highest kind, is the right use and application of what may be most correctly termed the supernatural; by which I mean those scenes, and objects, and actions, which are entirely out of, and utterly beyond the ordinary and common sphere and course of nature, and which exist only in the regions of fancy, being already there created, and not by any efforts of our own minds.

The use of the supernatural, although it is doubtless one of the most powerful and important efforts which can be exerted in artistical representation, is nevertheless but seldom to be resorted to; and in all cases the availing of it is to be regulated by the general rules for artistical design, and also by the principles which I have laid down with regard to the combination of ideas.

It consists essentially in the adding to natural common objects such as we see actually existent, qualities and attributes beyond those with which we perceive them to be ever really endowed, and of a new and original kind, such as are supposed

to confer upon them a nature different to that which belongs to any beings of the same order with which we are acquainted. Its end is only to bestow fresh characteristics on certain objects, while the objects themselves remain the same.

Although deformity and disproportion in any objects are, as a general rule, to be avoided, yet by a skilful and judicious management of the design as regards the proportion of particular figures, or the relative proportion one with another of the limbs or other parts of any individual form, as has been admirably done by some of the ancient painters and sculptors, much effect and dignity may be given to the composition, and the imagination greatly raised by it.

Nevertheless, the most exciting even of imaginative scenes and representations, should never be extravagant; nor ought those which are the most astonishing to do violence to probability. In the highest flights of the supernatural, nature should still be the directing principle. Indeed, when she is absent from the supernatural, it will be found to be also deprived of life; the body will be without the spirit. The utmost limits of the supernatural should never, moreover, reach to the improbable; and in no case should its efforts strike us as impossible. In fact, although varying from, the supernatural should not be at variance with nature; although different from, it should never be contrary to it. The former is supernatural; the latter is simply unnatural.

Therefore, however high we take our flight into the obscure regions of the supernatural, we ought not to lose sight of nature. We must still consider our real condition. On the other hand, common ordinary nature and the supernatural ought never to be represented together. The grand principle to be observed is that the two must be neither disregarded nor confounded.

Supernatural beings and descriptions when introduced into a composition, should nevertheless be uniformly treated in a supernatural manner. They should never be dealt with as are the common objects of nature; and the atmosphere which surrounds them should, as it were, partake somewhat of their mystery. The supernatural is, however, applicable to expression and character, as well as to description in design.

And in the painting by Guido of 'The Assumption of the Virgin,' contained in the Bridgewater Gallery, we have a sublime illustration of this principle in the supernaturally celestial expression of her countenance, which appears to be beaming with the radiance of heaven.

The celestial, which is but another, the highest type of the supernatural, in expression, is also finely, and indeed perfectly attained in Raphael's exquisite painting of 'St. Cecilia Enchanted by Celestial Music,' which adorns the gallery of the Academy of Arts at Bologna. The countenance of St. Cecilia, illumined by a rapturous smile, and glowing with heavenly radiance, is truly and thoroughly divine, and seems to be not only enchanted by the strains to which she is listening, but her soul, exalted into heaven, reflects some of the ecstasy by which it is affected on the features of the saint.

In Raphael's noble and beautiful painting of 'The Transfiguration,' the floating posture of our Lord in the air, as also the forms of Moses and Elias suspended, like airy clouds, by his side, are highly imaginative, and extensively endowed with the supernatural; while the divine expression in the countenance of the Saviour, contributes greatly to the celestial, and consequently supernatural character of the whole work.

On the other hand, Guido's much lauded painting of 'Aurora,' contained in the Rospigliosi Palace at Rome, I must confess myself unable to admire as, possibly, it deserves. The drawing and grouping and colouring are undoubtedly fine; but the expression seems not equal to the general design. The celestial females appear destitute of refinement and dignity, and rather to resemble dairymaids than divinities. Moreover, they are not over-modest in their appearance, although possibly this may not detract from their claims to be associated with some of the ancient exalted beings of this rank. The whole seems utterly wanting in the air of the supernatural suitable to such a subject, and also in becoming elevation to render it worthy of the representation here attempted.

Both the supernatural and the celestial in countenance and expression, as well as in form, may be represented; and the two should be ever contemporaneous and united, the one aid-

ing and giving force and effect to the other, corresponding with what we see attained in this respect in the exhibition of character and emotion. And alike in the faces and in the figures of angels, and other supernatural beings, the colouring, and the shading also, should aid the effect of the supernatural. These latter elements are what indeed mainly serve to depict the essence of the being represented; from which, moreover, its supernatural or celestial character is derived quite as much as from its form.

The supernatural in landscape scenery may be said to exist in, and is constituted by those objects and appearances, and that general character and arrangement of the landscape, which strike us as quite different to what we ordinarily observe, although they may not be actually different to what are witnessed in certain natural phenomena, and still less at variance with the real order of nature. Three classes of natural scenery appear to be peculiarly allied to the supernatural. These are—1. Moonlight scenes, when light of a different kind to what we ordinarily experience is diffused over the landscape, and so changes entirely its common aspect and character. 2. Sunsets, when tints quite different to those generally witnessed are spread over the face of nature. Landscape scenes of this character are indeed celestial as well as supernatural, their supernatural appearance being directly derived from celestial influences. 3. The third kind of scenery of a supernatural order is that which is presented when snow or frost changes the whole appearance of the landscape, and renders it quite different to anything that we ordinarily observe.

As already remarked, there is some landscape scenery that is not only supernatural, but celestial also, which is indeed the most exalted kind of the supernatural; although in order to be completely effective, it should be highly supernatural as well, which is not often the case. Scenes by moonlight, as also certain sunset scenes, are highly celestial, although not highly supernatural, but are both pleasing and imaginative to a large extent. A charm and a glory belong, indeed, to celestiality in scenery, to which no other class of scenery can lay claim.

The aerial indistinct appearance which the light of the moon affords to many objects, especially to buildings of a certain character, as also to some landscape views, particularly that which is diversified by water, is another feature which deserves to be remarked in scenery of this class. Not only is this kind of light very different in its colour from that of the sun, but the main outlines only of many forms are exhibited by this means, omitting the lesser details, and which often changes the character of the whole. A mystical air is thus diffused over the entire prospect.

Reflections in the water, whether of buildings or landscape scenery, and whether of trees or mountains, as also of the planets, will indeed frequently produce very picturesque effects, occasionally even approaching the supernatural. This is more especially the case by moonlight, when the dim tremulous light casts over every object an air of mystery, and serves to set the imagination vigorously at work, conjuring up shapes and images of different kinds to supply the vacancies that occur in the reality. A ripple on the water may conduce still further to vary or to mystify the scene, by acting the part of a kaleidoscope in changing the position of different objects.

So also a sunset by the peculiar and supernatural light which it throws over a landscape, occasionally so entirely changes its character as to make it approach the celestial. From the glory reflected upon the plains of earth by the heavenly bodies, we may surely form some conjecture respecting the splendour of that radiance, and the enchanting beauty of those scenes whose regions are beyond the skies.

Hence, it appears obvious that the supernatural may exist in colour as well as in form, especially in landscape scenery. Indeed, the colour equally with the form and shading, should be made to give effect to, and to heighten the appearance of the supernatural, whether in landscape or epic composition. While in each of these ingredients in the work there should be nature enough to render the description real, there must not be too much nature,—of common, every day, ordinary nature,—to prevent it from being supernatural. We have experience indeed of the supernatural effect of colour, not only in the

hues produced by the rays of the moon and by sunsets, but occasionally during the full glare of the sun, as in the case of the dark purple hues in which the mountains are sometimes wrapped, and the exquisite blue and azure tints which are occasionally visible on the surface of the Italian and Swiss lakes, which are so glorious in their radiance as to be not merely supernatural, but well-nigh celestial. The effect of moonlight, especially upon large buildings, such as cathedrals and castles, is often very striking and highly romantic, conferring upon them a sort of supernatural air. The lights and shades falling in dense masses, and the prominent outline of the whole only appearing, considerably vary their character and aspect from what they appeared during daylight.

A thunderstorm at night also occasionally displays a scene in landscape composition, in which the supernatural, and indeed the celestial also, to a large extent prevails. The radiance of the lightning throws a hue over the whole face of nature, entirely differing from any ordinary appearance that she ever assumes, the sudden and transient visitations of this rendering it the more effective and the more supernatural; while the roaring of the thunder, and the profound obscurity which succeeds the vivid bursts of light, add greatly to the supernatural and the celestial character of the prospect.

Occasionally, too, clouds and mists serve to confer upon mountains an apparently supernatural character, obscuring all but the mere outline by the density with which they enshroud them; or clothing them in a thin white veil, which exhibits only their general form, likening them to giant spectres, the *manes* of mountains which have passed away, and left merely their shadows to occupy the space they once so nobly filled. Thus also when clouds and snowcapped mountains become, as it were, intermixed, so that we are unable to discern what objects belong to earth and what to heaven,—the mountains nearly resembling and being mistaken for clouds, and the clouds closely resembling and appearing as though they were transformed into mountains,—both the supernatural and the celestial in mountain scenery may be surely said to prevail.

The dim purple shadowy outlines of distant mountains are

frequently endowed with the air of the supernatural, and seem also to belong as much to sky into whose regions they soar, as to earth from whose province they have receded, and might be claimed alike by both. This is also the case with those lofty ranges whose summits rear themselves above the clouds, as though they reached to realms beyond, while their bases are obscured by the dense vapours which rise from the plains below.

I have sometimes found, as I have already remarked when speaking of the emotions excited by objects of grandeur,* that a second visit to scenery of a very sublime and imaginative, and indeed supernatural character, has not moved me so much as did the first, although I had calculated that the more attentively such glories were contemplated, the more deeply would they impress the mind. I conclude, however, that they fail in their striking effect on the second view mainly from the absence of that astonishment which so excites and elevates any one on obtaining the first sight of them, which was mainly owing to the novel unexpected and supernatural quality of their appearance, but which would not of course be produced again when he was already aware of and prepared for the stupendous spectacle. On the other hand, I do not find that beautiful, or even necessarily that grand objects fade on repetition in a corresponding manner with those which are of the supernatural class; which is, no doubt, owing to the circumstance of the latter depending so much for support upon the excitement of a feeling of surprise. Besides this, it should be borne in mind that the pleasure which grand and beautiful objects call forth in our minds, may be excited over and over again indefinitely, while astonishment cannot well be caused more than once by the same occurrence or object.

The ghost scene in 'Macbeth'† is a fine display of the power, and of the right use of the supernatural, as is also the interview with the witches in the same tragedy.‡ Indeed, hardly any more successful attempts, and more perfect descriptions of the supernatural are anywhere to be met with.

* *Vide ante*, Chapter VIII. Sects. 2, 3. † Act iii. scene 5.
‡ Act iv. scene 1.

One of the most daring and effective efforts at the application of the supernatural, is that which is accomplished by Dante* in his description of the fusion of the forms of the sacrilegious Fucci into that of the flying serpent:—

"Ivy ne'er clasp'd
A dodder'd oak, as round the other's limbs
The hideous monster intertwined his own.
Then, as they both had been of burning wax
Each melted into other, mingling hues,
That which was either now was seen no more.
. . . . The two heads now became
One, and two figures blended in one form
Appear'd, where both were lost. Of the four lengths
Two arms were made; the belly and the chest,
The thighs and legs into such members changed
As never eye hath seen. Of former shape
All trace was vanish'd. Two, yet neither seem'd
That image miscreate, and so pass'd on
With tardy steps."

The introduction and application of the supernatural are also admirably contrived in the following highly imaginative description by the same great poet,† of the ghosts in the second chasm, in whom their sound and appearance and action alike conduce to add to the effect, as does also the excitement of the emotions which the scene is calculated to call forth:—

"Hence in the second chasm we heard the ghosts,
Who gibber in low melancholy sounds,
With wide stretch'd nostrils snort, and on themselves
Smite with their palms. Upon the banks a surf,
From the foul steam condensed, encrusting hung,
That held sharp combat with the sight and smell."

The following representation of the spiritual shadowy forms of another world, and of their action as well,‡ is also very imaginative, and the use of the supernatural is availed of with great skill:—

* 'Inferno,' canto 25, lines 52–56, 63–70.
† *Ibid.* canto 18, lines 101–106.
‡ 'Purgatorio,' canto 24, lines 4–7.

"The shadowy forms,
That seem'd things dead and dead again, drew in
At their deep-delved orbs rare wonder of me,
Perceiving I had life."

The account which is afforded of the angel coming over the waves with spirits to Purgatory is very sublime and imaginative.* The varied and mystical appearance of the light, and of the approach of the form, changing at intervals, is extremely fine, and strikingly effective :—

"When lo! as near upon the hour of dawn,
Through the thick vapours Mars with fiery beam
Glares down in west, over the ocean floor;
So seem'd, what once again I hope to view,
A light, so swiftly coming through the sea,
No winged course might equal its career.
From which when for a space I had withdrawn
Mine eyes, to make enquiry of my guide,
Again I look'd, and saw it grow in size
And brightness: then on either side appear'd
Something, but what I knew not, of bright hue,
And by degrees from underneath it came
Another. My preceptor silent yet
Stood, while the brightness, that we first discern'd,
Open'd the form of wings; then when he knew
The pilot, cried aloud, 'Down, down, bend low
Thy knees; behold God's angel: fold thy hands:
Now shalt thou see true ministers indeed.
Lo! how all human means he sets at nought;
So that nor oar he needs, nor other sail
Except his wings, between such distant shores.
Lo! how straight up to heaven he holds them rear'd,
Winnowing the air with those eternal plumes,
That not like mortal hairs fall off or change.'
As more and more toward us came, more bright
Appear'd the bird of God, nor could the eye
Endure his splendour near: I mine bent down.
He drove ashore in a small bark so swift
And light, that in its course no wave it drank.
The heavenly steersman at the prow was seen,

* 'Purgatorio,' canto 2, lines 13–44.

Visibly written Blessed in his looks.
Within, a hundred spirits and more there sat."

Of all the arts, however, dramatic acting probably affords the most favourable opportunities for, and is the most effectually aided by resort to the supernatural, while sculpture appears to be the least so; although even in some sculptural forms the representation of the supernatural has been very successfully attained. In the scenery of the theatre, as also in the performance itself, the use of the supernatural may be occasionally availed of with great effect, and with considerable success; and perhaps more completely in acting than in any other of the arts, where, moreover, science can afford the most extensive aid.

In music, the supernatural is available to a large extent, where representations of this character are aimed at, and as an aid to efforts of an imaginative kind. In architecture, costume, and gardening, it can be resorted to only indirectly, and to suggest or typify certain ideas.

X. As in the invention of the arts, so in imaginative composition and in artistical invention, accident will not only occasionally aid us, but will sometimes even effect what contrivance has failed to achieve. An invention of this kind by an accident, may, moreover, to a certain extent, be regarded as the product of nature. By skilfully availing ourselves of the hint thus given to us, we are entitled to call the conception our own.

The auxiliaries to imaginative representation correspond with those in artistical design and composition. The imagination, and especially the application of the supernatural, are, moreover, in many cases, as lately shown, as much aided by the colouring or style, as by the design itself, which should of course be suitable to the subject, and in which an extensive departure from ordinary nature, under proper regulations, may be allowed.

The shapes and figures apparently visible in clouds rocks and stones may also be studied both to aid and to originate the creation of new forms and features by the operation of the imagination. Indeed, the greater variety of resorts and of ma-

terials which any artist has, the richer and more original ought we to expect will be his imaginative conceptions and efforts. It may be questioned, however, whether the suggestions obtained from the observance of the forms of shadows and of clouds, and the shapes produced by stains on a wall, are not in reality more calculated to add to the copiousness and variety of our designs, than actually either to set in operation, or to aid the imagination. These exercises are in fact material in their nature, while imagination is in its essence fully and absolutely immaterial. These forms constitute the body, to which imagination supplies life and spirit. They may, therefore, be observed and resorted to without the imagination being to any extent exerted in the task; but unless in this operation the aid of the imagination is called in, the undertaking alluded to is a wholly useless one; the frames lie lifeless without any souls being communicated to them. The effort in question is, indeed, strictly an attempt not to aid the imagination, but to supersede it; to supply its place by some other means.

In the case of the poetry of Chaucer and Spenser, the antique, quaint rhyme in which it is composed, and the constant associations called forth with an age and state of things which have long passed by, conduce to throw an air of romance, and, indeed, of imagination over the entire narration, and to create an atmosphere around it of a congenial nature; analogous to the mode in which the antique frame and dark hues of an old picture, or the crumbling walls and clustering ivy about an old castle, serve to give them an air of veneration, alike suitable and characteristic, and adding extensively to their effect. Considerable variety, freshness, and originality, may also be sometimes infused into poetry from the cultivator of the art resorting to productions of an age and a country quite different from his own, and by which ideas of a character and order altogether dissimilar from those with which he and his readers are most familiar may be suggested. In this respect certain of the productions of the old Sanskrit poets might be of great use as aids to originative efforts, independent of the spirit and beauty by which they are distinguished.

XI. The exercise both of imagination and invention, which

has been shown* to consist merely in different operations of the same intellectual faculty of origination, is regulated by principles as sure as determined and as direct as is that of taste, and even of reason. Moreover, the reason and other faculties as much aid here as they do in the exercise of taste. By the reason, imagination and also invention are both directed aright, and prevented from going astray. The former faculty should, however, be so exercised that they be guided only, not impeded by it. It should check extravagance without destroying freedom.

The imaginative and inventive powers of the mind are, moreover, capable of being much enlarged and invigorated by exercise and cultivation, possibly to an extent almost if not entirely unlimited. Of this we shall be best convinced by again recurring to our inquiry into the nature and constitution of this branch of our intellectual faculties. As has been already pointed out,† imagination is a capacity, not of actually creating or originating things or ideas out of nothing, but of uniting together several ideas so as to form combinations different from what we have before experienced. We cannot produce anything entirely new out of the elements we resort to, as although the combinations themselves which we form may be new and original, the elements which constitute them are old and stale and of everyday use. Thus, as I have pointed out, all Milton's most imaginative descriptions, such as those of Satan, sin, death, hell, will be found to be entirely made up of elements, or of different qualities of beings, with which we are well acquainted, however original and novel when so combined they may appear in the composition.

The cultivation and enlargement of the imaginative capacity may be therefore effected principally in two modes:—1. By storing the mind with ideas and elements suitable and effective for the purpose of making these combinations. 2. By exercising it to perform with skill and effect combinations of this nature.

By the first of these efforts we shall obtain an ample store of ideas peculiarly suitable for making apt and original combi-

* *Vide ante*, Vol. I. Chap. II. Sects. 4, 7. † *Ibid.*

nations of this kind; and the more striking and original and effective are these ideas individually, the more so must necessarily be the combinations they are capable of producing.

The more richly the mind of any one is furnished with ideas to combine, the richer it may be expected will be his imaginative combinations; although different men will of course vary as to the skill with which they effect this operation. Many ideas, poor in themselves, may, moreover, form combinations of great value. Thus, viewing strange phenomena of nature, such as those displayed in the vast subterraneous cavities of the earth, or in the wild recesses of deserts or mountains, or among the frozen regions, or the spectacles occasionally afforded by the changes or irregular appearance of the heavenly bodies, or by rare and extraordinary animals, especially reptiles and insects, above all those wonders of the otherwise invisible world, both animal and vegetable, which the microscope reveals to us, are all highly useful and available in this respect. Tracing forms in the clouds, in the fire, or elsewhere, may also, as observed in the last section, in certain instances, greatly aid us here, and even serve to furnish us directly with compositions such as we are striving to effect. Whatever, indeed, contributes to expand, and enrich, and ennoble the mind and to add to its imaginative stores, is of service to us in this way. Thus, the study of astronomy, the observation of the heavenly bodies, and the conjecturing and speculation upon the wonders and prodigies in the unexplored regions of the universe, are each highly calculated to raise in us the sublimest ideas, and greatly to expand the imaginative power. Milton is a splendid instance of a mind so imbued and invigorated, of which every description and every sentiment in his immortal 'Paradise Lost' bears testimony. Even dreams may occasionally contribute to aid us here in the wild fantastic combinations they produce, and the supernatural aerial mode in which some scenes are described by them, and from which certain poets and painters are said to have derived their most effective descriptions.

By the second of these modes, we acquire a habit of combining those ideas which are most suitable one with another,

and which by their combination will produce the most striking effects.

It should be borne in mind, however, that it is a very different thing to cultivate the imagination, and merely to exercise it. Many attempt the latter, but very few effect the former. The results of the two are also different. In the one case we enlarge and extend and invigorate the powers of the machine, which is an aim that should be ever carefully kept in view: in the other we merely put it in motion. In the one case we obtain new force; in the other we simply expend the force existing.

Care should moreover be taken to raise the mind above insipidity, which is occasioned by feebleness in the imaginative powers, on the one hand; and to preserve it from running into extravagance, which is as it were the corruption of imagination, on the other, and from which reason should serve to restrain it. The imagination, indeed, like every other capacity of the mind, requires to be regulated and even kept in subjection. Extravagance is, in reality, nothing more or less than the free exercise of invention and imagination, unrestrained and uncorrected by the reason and by nature. Rules are, indeed, adapted not so much to improve, as to direct the exercise of the imaginative powers; although they cannot accelerate, they may control and order rightly these operations.

It may here be observed that by the foregoing exercises, if judiciously and effectively carried out, the mind will be also improved in the use and application of each of those elements of imaginative construction to which I have before referred,* as well as in making its various combinations and comparisons with the utmost skill, propriety, and effect;—in raising the most suitable inferences;—in attributing those qualities which mainly conduce to aid imaginative description;—in the obscurity and supernatural atmosphere in which many of these new objects and ideas should be enveloped;—and in supplying ideas and notions of beings and things of a supernatural and extraordinary description, such as our unaided inventive powers are unable to suggest.

* *Vide ante*, Sect. 7.

XII. We must now, however, refer to some of the most distinguished and striking examples afforded by certain justly renowned performances in each of the arts, of the combined operation of the foregoing principles for the production and regulation of efforts in imagination and invention generally; illustrations of their individual operation by themselves having been already in several instances supplied in the preceding sections.

The art of painting is in many respects admirably, and indeed peculiarly adapted for the representation of objects or scenes of an inventive or imaginative order. Extensive scope in this art is allowed for the exercise of those different efforts which contribute to give effect in this kind of composition. Various combinations are here attained with efficiency, and even facility, as regards the shape and general character of any being or scene which is described. And where it is needed, a considerable amount of obscurity in the representation of any parts may be effected as circumstances require, and the utmost range is also afforded for the introduction and display of the supernatural. All the elements already specified as belonging to imaginative effort, may be here also availed of to the full.

The most wonderful example in this branch of the arts is the painting of 'The Last Judgment,' in the Sistine Chapel at Rome, by Michael Angelo. The subject represented is one of the most solemn and awful and sublime nature possible; and the general effect of the picture is such as to excite within us corresponding emotions.

The first view of this extraordinary composition forcibly strikes us. We are at once amazed by the vast number of figures which the piece contains, who are in various attitudes and situations. At a glance, however, we perceive the object of the design; and the principal figure—the Messiah, who is enveloped in a halo of light, and is encircled by attendant saints and angels—is observed to be the foremost and most prominent object. The multitude of human forms which the picture contains serves alone to give it a character of grandeur; while their position and demeanour greatly heighten its effect in this respect.

The Saviour is sitting in judgment, attended by saints and angels. Those who have suffered martyrdom may be observed near Him, with the instruments of torture with which they were put to death. The Virgin Mary is close at his side, apparently interceding for those whose doom is about to be pronounced. The group of saints and martyrs forms one vast circle round the halo which surrounds the Saviour; immediately below them are the angels sounding the last trump. The dead may be observed, some rising out of their graves half clothed, others in an almost skeleton state, over whose bones the flesh appears to be gradually creeping. Some are seen floating heavily in the air, gradually ascending, almost in a state of torpor and stiffness, little more than mere inanimate masses, still retaining the position they were in when bound up with grave-clothes. Others are attempting to hide themselves again in their graves, and appear to be calling upon the rocks and mountains to cover them.

On the left of the Messiah is another group, consisting of those on whom the doom of condemnation has been passed, and who are about to be hurled down headlong into the depths below, where they are seized by infuriated demons who ferociously grasp them as they descend. In the contortions and writhings and terror which they exhibit, the agony which excites them is forcibly depicted.

On the opposite side of the picture, to the right of the Messiah, are seen the redeemed ascending up to the blissful regions of eternal glory.

But the lower part of the picture is undoubtedly the finest portion of it, where the great painter seems to have put forth all his power, and to have given full scope to the boundless range of his very fertile and extraordinary capacities of imagination and invention. The dead are here seen rising out of their graves; some newly awaken by the blast of the last trump, gazing around with wonder and amazement as though but just arisen from the sleep of death, and are tearing away the shrouds with which their limbs are bound. Some, as before observed, appear in a half skeleton state, others are floating in the air. Perhaps these latter form the finest and

most wonderful examples of imaginative power in dealing with the supernatural which even Michael Angelo has exhibited. At the base of the picture, on the left, is introduced the mythological figure of Charon ferrying with his boat across the Styx, and conveying those who have been hurled down and doomed to everlasting woe, on whom several fierce demons, characterized by supernatural savage ferocity and cruelty, are ravenously seizing, and who on reaching the other side of the Styx are themselves transformed into demons. Horns and tails are perceived to be shooting out, and humanity appears at once subsiding into demonism. The terror and agony depicted in those whom the demons are grasping, and the ferocity and fiendish rage of the latter, are very wonderful, as is also the whole delineation of the form and expression of these supernatural beings.

The noble performance which I have been describing, is however, now probably but a mere shadow of what it was in its original state. The effects of damp and smoke, as also of various accidents, have severally and extensively contributed to dim its splendour, and to mar its excellence; and the work of desolation has been further and more efficiently aided by the attempts at restoration, and the retouchings made by those who had neither the mind nor the mechanical power to reproduce any portion of the original conception. Still, with all this, much of the excellence of the painting as it was is yet perceptible, its splendour penetrating the dense mists in which it is enveloped. I believe, however, that the mind of the mighty artist is best seen, and is most vigorously reflected in the rough sketches that he made for select portions of his work, which are still preserved and remain unaltered, and which I have minutely examined; as also in the clear and vigorous engraving of it executed by Martin Rota under Michael Angelo's superintendence, and with the aid of his designs.

As a whole, this grand masterpiece of the most gigantic genius in imaginative effort of which pictorial art can boast, affords an admirable and, indeed, perfect illustration of the principles which I have endeavoured to lay down with respect to representations of this nature. The imaginative power and

effect of it are, moreover, greatly heightened by the regard which has been paid to the rules of composition and design in general, and for the due exhibition of character and emotion.

Thus, notwithstanding the multitude and variety of figures introduced, and the apparent confusion which prevails among them, the perspicuity of the design is preserved, although perhaps less extensively or completely than in some other compositions, especially those of Raphael, to which I have referred. With the exercise of the wildest imagination, strict regard to nature and propriety and correctness is in every particular paid, especially in the limbs and anatomy of the figures. The contrast which may be observed between the upper and lower parts of the picture, in the stillness and placidity of the one, and the activity and terrors of the other, adds much to the general effect. The principal figure is at once perceived, and strikes the eye; and the feelings and passions which animate each individual are most powerfully and forcibly depicted.

With respect more immediately to the mode in which the great painter has acted upon those particular principles which are here laid down as employed in imaginative composition; we must observe that in the combination together of different ideas which he has formed, as in the representation of the demons, and of those newly awaken from the grave, strict propriety to nature, and to our ideas of what may exist, has been paid. However extraordinary, or to some extent even extravagant some things may seem, there is nothing which is revolting to the mind as impossible, or actually contrary to nature. Nevertheless, the most original inventions here traceable are all effected by combinations of different ideas in the manner already described.

The general design and progress of the transaction we are forcibly led to infer from what is actually represented; and we see at once what is to follow, and what has just preceded.

The associations raised by demons and graves and skeletons, are most powerful in their effect, and conduce very greatly to add to the vigour of the whole scene. Perhaps, indeed, this circumstance may alone and sufficiently atone for the introduction of Charon into a composition of this character.

The obscurity which has been thrown over certain portions of the design, is another element which much conduces to its imaginative effect, where the mind is left to wander through the dark maze. The vastness of the whole scene, moreover, adds extensively to this result.

The majesty and transcendent might of the Messiah, whose figure has been censured as deficient in dignity, is atoned for by representing Him as the sole power which originates and animates the stupendous event here to be witnessed; and, indeed, the meekness of His appearance conjoined with our consciousness of His character in this respect, conduces substantially to, instead of detracting from His dignity. None are suffered to approach Him but the Virgin, and even she shrinks behind Him. All the rest retire at a distance. He is encircled by radiance, is placed in the centre of all, and the attention of each is directed towards Him. The apparent power energy and ferocity with which the demons are invested, and their supernatural forms, are what most conduce to their imaginative effect; while the celestial nature of the subject completes and ennobles the character of the whole composition.

Most wonderfully, too, has the great painter availed himself of the use of the supernatural in the representation of the bodies floating in the air, which I have before described; and in depicting not only the forms of the demons, but the fury and passion, almost equally supernatural in their excess, which seem to excite them.

A very sublime effort towards the accomplishment of the supernatural, which combines also an extensive degree both of grandeur and beauty, has been effected by Raphael in his figure of Christ, contained in his noble picture of 'The Transfiguration;' where the Redeemer is represented as majestically, but supernaturally floating in the air, his frame appearing to be light and ethereal, celestial in its substance as well as its nature. The drapery here aids the figure, and the expression of the face gives force and effect to the whole. It is indeed truly divine, and fully as celestial as is the figure.

Sculpture may at first sight appear much less adapted than painting for representations of a highly imaginative character,

as it possesses less scope as to its power of describing; and, as already pointed out, it is difficult to portray any object or scene by this art unless in the most clear and defined manner, so that but little liberty seems to be afforded to the imagination. But although sculpture from its inflexibility, and its inability to exhibit perspective, as also from its definite mode of imitation, almost excluding the possibility of introducing anything approaching to obscurity, which has been shown to be so essential an element in all imaginative efforts, may appear ill adapted for any great achievements of this character; yet, on the other hand, from its limited manner of representing, giving form only, and leaving so much to the imagination to supply, it is eminently suggestive, and affords a greater opportunity to the mind to fill up the vacant space, than does painting. So far it is admirably fitted for certain imaginative representations. Indeed, not only the imaginative, but the supernatural has been no less daringly than successfully attempted in sculpture by Bernini, in his renowned statue of 'Apollo and Daphne,' which adorns the Villa Borghese at Rome, in which is exhibited with transcendent skill and imaginative power, the wondrous transformation of the limbs of the man into the trunk of the tree, the arms gradually growing into branches, and boughs and leaves sprouting out in various parts of the body. And yet there is nothing here to outrage, or obviously or even apparently at variance with nature. In fact, the nearer to nature is the representation, the more completely it accomplishes the supernatural. The more exactly it accords with our own experience of life, the more strongly are we impelled to credit the illusion attempted.

On the whole, however, perhaps, basso-relievos are better adapted for imaginative sculptural representations, than are completely formed figures of the size of life. Designs also for sculptural composition, which may be contended to partake more of the nature of the art of painting than that of sculpture, admit of much imaginative effort, as in those of our great sculptor Flaxman, from the 'Iliad' and 'Odyssey,' may be evinced very fully. They supply merely the outline, leaving the imagination

by inference to furnish all the rest, which, if put into a proper course, it will often do far more vividly and effectually than the most skilful artistical representation could effect. Nevertheless, very imaginative subjects have occasionally been produced in sculpture, as in the instances already stated, and in the forms of deities and demons and other supernatural beings, as also of sirens and nymphs.

Of all the arts, poetry is no doubt the best adapted for efforts of the description of which I have been treating in the present chapter, as it affords the greatest scope for the range of ideas; and the element of obscurity which, as I have observed, so often contributes largely to the imaginative effect of representations of this nature, may here be exercised to the fullest extent.

There are, indeed, many scenes, and many imaginary transactions and objects, of which we can form but very indistinct and incomplete conceptions, which therefore cannot with propriety be represented in painting, but which may be described in poetry, because in the latter art no exact or defined idea is given of them, although from those with which they are associated, we are led to form in our minds certain obscure and undefined, but not altogether inadequate notions of them; while, on the other hand, whatever we describe in painting, must be for the most part clearly and distinctly portrayed. Thus, in some of the poetical parts of the Scriptures, as in the passages already quoted, and in Milton's 'Paradise Lost,' as also in certain of the tragedies of Shakspeare, we have descriptions of the Deity, and of supernatural beings, from which we are led to form sublime and indistinct, although vivid notions of them, while we are altogether unable to afford any clear representation of them upon canvas. In the following very grand and imaginative description by Milton, of the encounter of Satan with Abdiel and his repulse by the sword of the latter,* we shall observe how extensively the account of Satan's power energy and magnitude conduces to its effect; and how much these endowments are also raised by the comparisons instituted, and by the ideas of great and

* 'Paradise Lost,' book vi. lines 193–198.

extraordinary qualities which are either called forth or suggested :—

> "Ten paces huge
> He back recoil'd; the tenth on bended knee,
> His massy spear upstay'd, as if on earth
> Winds under ground, or waters forcing way
> Sidelong, had push'd a mountain from his seat
> Half sunk with all his pines."

The narration of the encounter between Satan and Michael, is one of the noblest throughout the poem.* Not only the ideas of their appearance, but of their actions also, are much raised by instituting a comparison of the individuals introduced with beings and objects of a more exalted nature, and greater magnitude. Satan and Michael are here compared to Gods, and represented as of supernatural stature. Their shields are described as resembling "two broad suns," and their action is assimilated to the rushing together of planets.

> "Likest Gods they seem'd,
> Stood they or mov'd, in stature, motion, arms,
> Fit to decide the empire of great Heav'n.
> Now wav'd their fiery swords, and in the air
> Made horrid circles: two broad suns their shields
> Blaz'd opposite, while expectation stood
> In horror: from each hand with speed retir'd,
> Where erst was thickest fight, th' angelic throng,
> And left large field, unsafe within the wind
> Of such commotion: such as, to set forth
> Great things by small, if nature's concord broke,
> Among the constellations war were sprung,
> Two planets rushing from aspect malign
> Of fiercest opposition in mid-sky
> Should combat, and their jarring spheres confound.
> Together both with next to 'Almighty arm
> Uplifted imminent, one stroke they aim'd
> That might determine, and not need repeat,
> As not of pow'r at once; nor odds appear'd
> In might or swift prevention. But the sword

* 'Paradise Lost,' book vi. lines 301–328.

Of Michael from the armoury of God,
Was giv'n him temper'd so, that neither keen
Nor solid might resist that edge. It met
The sword of Satan with steep force to smite
Descending, and in half cut sheer; nor stay'd,
But with swift wheel reverse, deep ent'ring shar'd
All his right side: then Satan first knew pain,
And writh'd him to and fro convolv'd."

The allusion to Satan's first feeling pain, and the description of him as writhing like a serpent, contribute much to give a supernatural air to his character, and to cast a veil of obscurity over it which add much to the imaginative effect.

The stupendous fall of Satan and his powers from heaven on their being driven down headlong into the infernal regions, is represented with great sublimity.* Instead of giving a direct enumeration of those who were thus precipitated, and describing the extent of the vast space through which they were hurled, all this is attained by a reference merely to the amazing confusion and dismay which their descent produced, and to the time which was occupied in its accomplishment. Thus, it is left in obscurity for the imagination to infer the terrible nature of the overthrow, and to measure out the vast depth of that dreadful abyss into which they were plunged.

"Hell heard th' unsufferable noise; Hell saw
Heav'n ruining from Heav'n, and would have fled
Affrighted; but strict fate had cast too deep
Her dark foundations, and too fast had bound.
Nine days they fell: confounded Chaos roar'd,
And felt tenfold confusion in their fall
Through his wild anarchy, so huge a rout
Incumber'd him with ruin. Hell at last
Yawning, receiv'd them whole, and on them clos'd:
Hell their fit habitation, fraught with fire
Unquenchable, the house of woe and pain."

Another very splendid example from the same great poem of the imaginative effect in description produced by the combina-

* 'Paradise Lost,' book vi. lines 867–877.

tion together of different qualities, comparisons with various objects, and obscurity with regard to the whole, so that much is left to the imagination to infer, is afforded by the following representation of death :*—

> "The other shape,
> If shape it might be call'd, that shape had none
> Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb,
> Or substance might be call'd that shadow seem'd,
> For each seem'd either; black it stood as Night;
> Fierce as ten Furies; terrible as Hell,
> And shook a dreadful dart. What seem'd his head
> The likeness of a kingly crown had on."

Notwithstanding the beauty excellence and merit, as imaginative efforts more especially, of some of the descriptions in Dante already cited; it must be allowed that in many instances he is too sensual and corporeal to be highly successful in this sublime walk, besides being in certain cases very repulsive from the direct reference to blood and mangled bodies and gushing entrails, contained in those passages, which detract extensively from the dignity and celestiality and imaginative effect and power of the poem. The following representation of the spirits† is open to the objection of being too material and gross as well as undignified, for beings of so divine a nature, as also for so noble a theme :—

> "Confused they lay,
> One o'er the belly, o'er the shoulders one
> Roll'd of another; sideling crawl'd a third
> Along the dismal pathway."

Virgil's account of the death of Laocoon, already quoted,‡ is one of the very finest in poetry, and is peculiarly valuable as affording ample illustration of the principles which I have propounded. In the description of the serpents, the aid of the supernatural is at once resorted to in the opening of the narration, as regards their immense size, the commotion which

* 'Paradise Lost,' book ii. lines 666–673.
† 'Inferno,' canto 29, lines 65–68.
‡ *Vide ante*, Chapter VIII. Sect. 3.

they cause, the terror they excite, and the splendour and extraordinary nature of their appearance. Their mode of action and motions are also finely represented. By the narrative of their attack upon Laocoon and his two sons our feelings are strongly excited, on account of the physical sufferings endured by each, and yet more by the mortal agony which the father underwent from seeing his children so cruelly tortured before his eyes; as also by hearing that he himself fell a victim to his vain efforts to rescue them. The action of the serpents feeding on the living frames of the youths, the contortions and writhings of the latter, the struggles and cries of the father, and the blood and venom sprinkling the sacred fillets, still further call forth our pity. The subsequent action of the serpents, with which the account closes, serves yet more to assure us of their supernatural qualities, and that they were directed as instruments of Divine vengeance, thus adding both divineness and dignity to the whole description.

The description by Virgil of Elysium, and his representation of supernatural scenes and objects, is in many respects far inferior to that of Milton.* It is as a whole too material, too much based upon our notions of terrestrial scenes and objects, and greatly needs the aid of the supernatural. Some of the passages are doubtless very fine, and the incidents introduced touching and affecting. The account of Anchises surveying in a shady valley his descendants, of his recognizing Æneas, and of the latter stretching out his arms in affectionate eagerness to embrace him when he discovers that it is but a shadow that he is addressing, is extremely beautiful and moving.†

"At pater Anchises penitus convalle virenti
Inclusas animas superumque ad lumen ituras,
Lustrabat studio recolens, omnemque suorum
Fortè recensebat numerum carosque nepotes,
Fataque fortunasque virûm moresque manusque.
Isque ubi tendentem adversum per gramina vidit
Ænean, alacris palmas utrasque tetendit,
Effusæque genis lacrimæ; et vox cecidit ore:

* 'Æneid,' lib. vi.

† *Ibid.* lib. vi. lines 680–702.

'Venisti tandem, tuaque spectata parenti
Vicit iter durum pietas? datur ora tueri,
Nate, tua; et notas audire et reddere voces?'
. . . . . .
Sic memorans, largo fletu simul ora rigabat.
Ter conatus ibi collo dare brachia circum;
Ter frustra comprensa manus effugit imago,
Par levibus ventis volucrique simillima somno."*

Virgil's account of the descent into the infernal regions, of the sights of woe and horror and wonder there witnessed, of the sibyl, of Charon and Cerberus, of the shades wandering in the groves, and of the nature of those regions, is very imaginative and very touching, although throughout it must be allowed to be tarnished by the defects alluded to.

But the most perfect imaginative description which equals if not surpasses anything of the kind, is that relating to the shade of Dido, which Æneas sees wandering alone:—

"Inter quas Phœnissa recens à vulnere Dido
Errabat silvâ in magnâ: quam Troïus heros

* This passage has been thus rendered into English verse by Mr. Dryden:—

"But old Anchises, in a flow'ry vale,
Review'd his muster'd race, and took the tale—
Those happy spirits which, ordain'd by Fate,
For future being and new bodies wait—
With studious thought observed th' illustrious throng,
In Nature's order as they passed along—
Their names, their fates, their conduct, and their care,
In peaceful Senates and successful war.
He, when Æneas on the plain appears,
Meets him with open arms, and falling tears,
'Welcome,' he said, 'the gods' undoubted race!
O long expected to my dear embrace!
Once more 'tis given me to behold your face!
The love and pious duty which you pay
Have pass'd the perils of so hard a way,
. . . . . .
He said: and falling tears his face bedew:
Then thrice around his neck his arms he threw;
And thrice the flitting shadow slipp'd away,
Like winds, or empty dreams that fly the day."

Ut primum juxta stetit agnovitque per umbras
Obscuram, qualem primo qui surgere mense
Aut videt aut vidisse putat per nubila lunam,
Demisit lacrimas, dulcique affatus amore est:
Infelix Dido."*

The simile of the new moon rising through a thin cloud, which the gazer at is doubtful whether he sees or not, is one of extreme beauty and exquisite delicacy. The mystic dim aerial appearance of the shade could not have been more finely portrayed; and the associations connected with the solemn twilight of the moon are highly suitable and effective. Milton possibly from this adopted his comparison of Satan after his fall to the sun newly risen, looking through the horizontal misty air, shorn of its beams.† Milton's simile is, however, neither so appropriate nor so beautiful as Virgil's. From its not being so natural a comparison in Milton's description as in the former, it seems the more probable that he borrowed the idea from Virgil, instead of taking it directly from nature.

But beautiful and imaginative as Virgil's description undoubtedly is of the regions of eternal bliss, and of the condition of those who enjoy them, it is immeasurably below that which is afforded us by Revelation, and which is contained in the Apocalypse, whose representations are infinitely more exalted, more grand, and more highly imaginative than anything of the same order elsewhere attempted. The account here given of the splendour and majesty of the Eternal, the glorious cities,

* Æn. lib. vi. lines 450–455. The following translation has been effected by Mr. Dryden of the foregoing quotation:—

"Not far from these Phœnician Dido stood,
Fresh from her wound, her bosom bathed in blood;
Whom when the Trojan hero hardly knew,
Obscure in shades, and with a doubtful view,
(Doubtful as he who sees, through dusky night,
Or thinks he sees, the moon's uncertain light,)
With tears he first approach'd the sullen shade;
And, as his love inspired him, thus he said:
Unhappy queen!"

† 'Paradise Lost,' book i. lines 596–517.

the seas of crystal, the golden pavements, the adamantine walls, the celestial choirs, the myriads of the nations of the earth, the angelic throngs, the transformations of the celestial bodies, the mighty convulsions with which through the wide empire of the universe nature is rent;—how far in majesty and grandeur, and, above all, in imaginative power, does it transcend what Virgil tells us of the green fields and streams and bowers, of which the description of his heaven is made up!

The finest and noblest, the most exalted and perfect examples of imaginative description are, indeed, those afforded in the Apocalypse. Here a number of vast and sublime images are combined together; the comparisons instituted are of the grandest nature; the attributes ascribed are the most stupendous, dignified, and powerful; the inferences raised from the objects introduced often impel the mind on to an infinite extent; a solemn veil of obscurity and mystery is diffused over the narration; the scenes and visions represented are mainly of a supernatural order; and their celestial nature at once throws an air of sublimity over the whole.

Thus, the opening account of the wonders which were revealed is of extraordinary majesty and sublimity, to which latter quality its extreme simplicity much conduces.

> "Behold a throne was set in heaven,
> And One sat on the throne."*

The comparison of His appearance to jasper and sardine stone, and the representation of the rainbow around the throne like an emerald,† raise in our imagination very noble sentiments. The description of the elders clothed in white with crowns of gold; of the spirits of God which were before it; of the lightnings and thunderings and voices which proceeded from it; of the glorious sea of glass like unto crystal; of the four mysterious beasts about the throne so wonderful in their nature; and of the eternal ceaseless adoration paid to Him who sat upon the throne;—all contribute together to fill the mind with the most sublime and awful and grand ideas.‡

The representations afforded of the Lamb, of the song of the

* Chap. iv. v. 2. † Vs. 3. ‡ Vs. 4–8.

elders and voices of the angels, of the beasts, and of all the hosts of heaven joining together at once in the adoration of the Lamb, are also exceedingly fine.* The account of the opening of the seals, and the description of the pale horse and of death riding forth accompanied by hell, and having power given unto him to destroy a fourth part of the earth, are especially of this character.

"And I looked, and behold a pale horse:
And his name that sat on him was Death,
And Hell followed with him.
And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth,
To kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth."†

The same sublime and mysterious tone belongs also to the description of the souls of those who had suffered for the word, which were under the altar and crying aloud for vengeance.‡ The representation of the earthquake on the opening of the sixth seal:—"the sun black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon as blood; the stars of heaven falling to the earth; the heavens passing away like a scroll rolled together; the mountains and islands moved out of their places; and the kings and great men of the earth terror-stricken and hiding themselves in the dens and rocks of the mountains, and calling upon them to cover them and hide them from the face of Him who sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb,"§—is calculated to excite in the mind the most sublime ideas, and to afford extensive suggestions to the imagination. These descriptions owe their imaginative power to the mysterious and exalted nature of the topics contained in them. Everything is told with the utmost simplicity. The most overwhelming events are narrated calmly and without excitement,—like the silent and still tale which nature unfolds in her grandest scenes.

The representation of the "four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, so that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree,"‖ seems to be the precursor of some dreadful

* Chap. v. vs. 6–14. † Chap. vi. vs. 8. ‡ Vs. 9–11.
§ Vs. 12–17. ‖ Chap. vii. vs. 1.

pestilence, or some awful convulsion. It reminds us at once of that sublime occurrence we have all witnessed in nature, the dead and dread stillness preceding the outburst of a thunderstorm. The account of the number of those sealed, and the description of the vast "multitude which no man could number of all nations, and kindred, and people, and tongues, standing before the throne, and before the Lamb, all clothed in white and bearing palms in their hands," and all at once joining in adoration,* is suggestive of a truly sublime and noble and vast spectacle.

The description of the silence in heaven for the space of half an hour after the opening of the seventh seal, seems to forbode some momentous event;† while that of the "resounding of the voices, and thunderings, and lightnings" from the earth, and the earthquake, is awfully grand.‡ The account of the "hail and fire mingled with blood," which was "cast upon the earth and burnt up a third part of the trees, and all green grass;" of the "great mountain, burning with fire, cast into the sea," a third part of which became blood, and of the destruction which followed; of the burning star which fell from heaven upon the third part of the rivers and fountains of waters; of the smiting of the sun, and darkness, and calamities which followed; and of the "angel flying through the midst of heaven" proclaiming "woe, woe to the inhabiters of the earth;" are alike magnificent and wonderful.§

In another part, mysterious and very dreadful events are mentioned as occurring. The fall of the star, the bottomless pit, and the darkening of the sun by its smoke, the issuing forth of the locusts against the inhabitants of the earth, and perhaps, beyond all, the description of the locusts are peculiarly sublime, and highly imaginative,—

"And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle;
And on their heads were as it were crowns like gold;
And their faces were as the faces of men;
And they had hair as the hair of women;

* Chap. vii. vs. 4, 9, 10.
† Chap. viii. vs. 1.
‡ Vs. 5.
§ Vs. 7, 8, 10–13.

And their teeth were as the teeth of lions.
And they had breastplates as it were breastplates of iron;
And the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots, of many horses running to battle.
And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails, and their power was to hurt man five months.
And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name is Abaddon."*

The passages here cited doubtless contain creations of the utmost imaginative power. The description, too, of the myriad army of horsemen is very wonderful and striking:—

"And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them,
Having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth and brimstone:
And the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions;
And out of their mouths issued fire, and smoke, and brimstone."†

The representation of the "mighty angel" which came down from heaven, is wonderfully magnificent and imaginative. He is clothed with a cloud, and adorned with a rainbow, his countenance is as the sun, and his feet are as pillars of fire. His vast stature and strength are evinced by his having his right foot on the sea, and his left on the earth, while his voice is as that of a lion, and is accompanied or re-echoed by seven thunders.‡ When he sware he lifted up his hand to heaven, and seemed to reach the very clouds, so vast was his stature.§ And he "sware by him that liveth for ever and ever," who created heaven and earth and all things.‖ The oath sworn to heaven by this mighty and tremendous being was of the most momentous nature, "that time should be no more."** Everything relating to him, as regards his form, his stature, his adornments, his voice and action, his denunciations, all the attributes ascribed to him, and the comparisons instituted regarding him, are of the most sublime and supernatural character. The imaginative effect is here, indeed, much heightened by the grandeur of the description.

The comparison of the voice from heaven to the sound of many waters, and to thunder, is extremely fine.†† The de-

* Chap. ix. vs. 1-3, 7-11. † Vs. 17. ‡ Chap. x. vs. 1-3.
§ Vs. 5. ‖ Vs. 6. ** *Ibid.* †† Chap. xiv. vs. 2.

scription of the "angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to proclaim to every nation,"* excites also very noble and grand images.

The account of the angel's pouring out his vial upon the sea, which became as the blood of a dead man, and of the pouring out of the vials on the sun and upon Euphrates, is especially imaginative and sublime.† The description of the "three unclean spirits like frogs which came out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet, and which are the spirits of devils working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of the great day of God Almighty,"‡ is a very wonderful and supernatural representation. The narrative of the pouring by the seventh angel of his vial into the air; of the "great voice out of the temple of heaven from the throne" which followed it; and of the "voices and thunders and lightnings, and great earthquake" and mighty convulsions which succeed,—the islands fleeing away, the mountains vanishing; and the terrific hail falling from heaven,§—is truly grand and stupendous.

In another passage, the description of the earth being illumined by the glory of the angel which descended with great power from heaven, is also very fine.‖

The comparisons of the voice which was heard to "the noise of a great multitude talking, to the murmur of many waters, and to the sound of mighty thunderings," are extremely sublime.** The adoration offered accords well with the character of the mode in which it is done. The descriptions are also very rich and imaginative of heaven opening, and the white horse with One sitting upon it;†† of the appearance of Him who rode upon the horse, whose "eyes were as a flame of fire, and on whose heads were many crowns."‡‡ The mysterious declaration that "He had a name written that no man knew but He Himself," excites the most sublime ideas.§§ As do also the descriptions of His vesture dipped in blood;‖‖ of "the armies

* Chap. xiv. vs. 6. † Chap. xvi. vs. 3, 8, 12. ‡ Vs. 13, 14.
§ Vs. 17–21. ‖ Chap. xviii. vs. 1. ** Chap. xix. vs. 6.
†† Vs. 11. ‡‡ Vs. 12. §§ *Ibid.* ‖‖ Vs. 13.

of heaven following Him upon white horses, and clothed in fine linen;"* and of the "angel standing in the sun," and "crying aloud to the fowls of the air that fly in the midst of heaven, to come together to eat the flesh of the kings, and captains, and great men, and their horses, and of all men."†

In the following passage the narration, although simple in the extreme, is passingly sublime, wonderful, and beautiful,—

"And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat upon it."‡

Such were His appearance and majesty, that

"From His face the earth and the heaven fled away;
"And there was no place found for them."§

No language, no description the most elaborate, no power of expression could give a more noble idea of the transcendent majesty and terrible nature of the being who sat on the throne, than we here obtain, as also from the events resulting from His presence. The extract which follows is also remarkable for the same simple sublimity:—

"And I saw the dead, the small and the great, stand before God;
"And the books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the book of life:
"And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the book according to their works."‖

This plain narration excites in the mind the most vast and tremendous ideas of the scene here referred to, more especially as regards the countless myriads of the multitude assembled, the majesty and glory of the judge, the grandeur awe and magnificence of the whole occurrence.

The account which follows also raises in the mind ideas of the utmost wonder and awe:—

"And the sea gave up the dead which were in it;
"And death and hell gave up the dead which were in them,
"And they were judged every man according to their works."**

The most laboured representation could not possibly contribute more to raise our minds than is here done as to the wonderful

* Chap. xix. vs. 13, 14. † Vs. 17, 18. ‡ Chap. xx. vs. 11.
§ *Ibid.* ‖ Vs. 12. ** Vs. 13.

nature of the events described. The allusions to the sea from her inmost depths restoring those whom she had swallowed up, and hell and death from their dark and gloomy recesses surrendering those whom they had held captive,—are suggestive of ideas of the sublimest order.

"And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire."*

This is the final consummation of the overthrow of the once rampant powers of darkness. By every true lover of poetry, and every admirer of imaginative effort of the most exalted kind, this glorious and sublime masterpiece of inspired narration cannot but be studied with rapture. Indeed, as regards the greatness and boldness of the images introduced, the beauty of the allusions, the variety and supernatural order of the scenes portrayed, it is altogether without a parallel in poetic description.

Narrations in eloquence, and those in poetry of the character treated of in the present chapter, are so nearly allied that the principles here laid down as applicable to the one, may be considered as equally so to the other.

In descriptions of this class by eloquence, metaphor is very extensively had recourse to, and serves to supply to a certain extent the opportunity which poetry, from its nature and mode of operation, so much more largely possesses, of representing scenes and subjects of an ideal and imaginative character.

Indeed, the passages here quoted from the Apocalypse, might be contended to belong rather to prose than to poetry, as, in our version at least, they are not placed in any set rhyme, and it may be doubtful whether they were ever in this form; although it appears that they are a kind of mixed prose and rhyme, the greater part being in prosaic style, while particular passages, such as solemn proclamations and odes, being rendered into metre. This composition must consequently be presumed to be neither poetry nor eloquence, but something rising superior to either, having the wildness and effectiveness of the first, though free from its restraint; and being possessed of the command of language and copiousness of words

* Chap. xx. v. 14.

appertaining peculiarly to the latter,—possibly a sort of angelical language, or rather rhapsody, the very idiom of heaven.

From the peculiar nature of its material, as well as from its freedom and power, music is, perhaps, of all the arts, in many important respects, the best adapted to excite and to lead on the imagination, if not actually to direct it to a definite point. In music the exercise of the imagination, as also the invention of new pieces, are much aided by the observation of sounds in nature, as is original composition of each kind. But music, as I have already remarked, must be considered rather as mainly fitted to aid the other arts in the production of imaginative narrations or descriptions, when made use of to accompany them, than as capable of itself independently to attain any such ends. Thus, in scenic theatrical representation it adds greatly to the imaginative effect, which works in the other arts of painting sculpture poetry eloquence and also architecture, are calculated to produce.

It is, indeed, chiefly by creating in our minds associations of ideas, that music is enabled to accomplish the extensive ends which it occasionally effects. It is perhaps mainly successful in aiding poetry in the description of imaginative and supernatural and celestial scenes and objects, and in carrying on the mind to the furthest limits in its efforts to soar into the highest regions to which these compositions would lead it.

Probably in none of the arts is more scope afforded to invention, and even to imagination also in a certain way, than there is in architecture. Why the architect, whose natural province appears to be variety,—inasmuch as the forms of trees and other natural objects from which the art first derived its invention are of a variety almost infinite,—should be confined to following the styles already discovered, and excluded from all attempts at origination, appears altogether inexplicable. From this cause it is that the most unsuitable designs have been appropriated to purposes entirely different from those for which they were first used, such as Pagan styles of architecture for temples of Christian worship. The vast difference between our climate and those of Greece and Italy, ought surely to have induced the foundation of new styles of architecture varying from

theirs. Nor does there seem to be any reason whatever why new orders of architecture should not be invented, provided they are controlled and regulated by the same principles of taste which govern those already established.

Architecture, and also gardening and costume, owe in reality as much to invention, if not to imagination, as do painting and sculpture and poetry. The former of these arts originated and grew up from the imitation and the combination of different forms which nature presented to our view, as the trunks and outlines of trees, the shapes of mountains, and the forms of caves.* Nay, the very leaves of the trees and the disposition of their fibres, and the shapes of flowers themselves, the mouldings of shells and the figures of certain animals, even of the insect world, all present to us designs and suggestions, and materials for designs worthy of our deepest contemplation and closest study; and admit, moreover, of almost endless combinations out of which new varieties will arise.

All that is most beautiful in art originated in the imitation, direct or indirect, of nature. In later times, other forms and shapes, besides those which nature presented, have been imitated, though but little beauty or richness has been produced.

But even in our day it might be presumed that out of the rich, and, indeed, endless varieties of nature, enough may still be found to afford suggestions for new styles to the architect. In each art the origin of it was from external nature; the modification and completion of it is from the internal mind of man. The latter is as unfitted to originate, as the former is to complete this undertaking.

The most imaginative transactions may be represented with all due effect on the stage. Perhaps, however, the scenery here, in which painting is the chief auxiliary, and for which it is resorted to, is that on which we principally depend. In the representation of the supernatural, more especially, it is the main aid. Possibly the true test of the efficiency of any dramatic imaginative piece is this,—whether it exceeds or falls short of the previous ideas of the scene in the mind of the spectator. But this must to a certain degree more or less depend upon

* *Vide ante*, Vol. I. Chap. III. Sect. 7.

and fluctuate with the particular genius of each spectator; it ought, however, at any rate to exceed the average conception of the scene.

Costume of itself, although it affords the fullest scope for the exercise of invention, does not appear to allow of much opportunity for the display of imaginative power. As in the case of architecture, costume is, indeed, far more favourable for efforts in invention than for those in imagination; its capacities for the former are, in fact, almost unlimited, and here the ingenuity and taste of those who are engaged in this pursuit have full scope to display themselves, so that new styles in each branch of costume are continually invented, being, however, mainly adopted from, or rather gradual variations of those which have been already in fashion. Caprice and taste alike urge us on, and aid us here.

In gardening, imagination as well as invention may sometimes find free scope for exercise, and the most important results may be effected through their aid in the production of artificial effects and illusive appearances. Sunk fences, which give to several enclosures the effect of being thrown into one vast plain, and the disposal of different pieces of water so that the whole may seem to form part of one great natural lake or river, and the imitation of islands by the formation of promontories on its banks, may afford ample scope both to invention and imagination in the art of gardening. For the only real and noble examples of imaginative efforts in this art, we must, however, appeal to nature herself in her vastest and boldest enterprises; to the ravines of Switzerland, where rocks and crags run into all sorts of wild and fantastic shapes, and glaciers and avalanches set off the scene, rendering it like one of enchantment, or of the regions of another world;—territories in which both entire freedom and full scope are afforded to nature to indulge in all kinds of imaginative creations. Nevertheless, in the art of gardening, much has been accomplished in some instances, not only as regards the vigour and boldness of the design, but in efforts of an imaginative character, corresponding with those which nature has effected in her sublimest prospects, in her savage Alpine glens, the ravines of the Pyrenees, and the

crags of Skye. Thus, from the wild and rude elements which have been introduced into the extensive and picturesque grounds of certain of our nobility, as is more especially the case at Alton Towers and at Hawkstone,—art aiding nature, carrying on what she has commenced, and completing what she has suggested, —and through the tasteful and judicious disposition of water and rock and wood, scenes not only of boldness and grandeur but of imagination also, have been attained in the art of gardening. Some of the most picturesque and daring feats of nature have thus been successfully imitated, if not rivalled. Wild and rare objects, such as are peculiarly calculated to rouse and to set at work the imagination, will be found, and present themselves to the eye at each turn. Here a rugged crag, there a deep ravine, in another spot a foaming cascade are made to appear; and the whole is set off with every variety of foliage and stately trees and wild plants, and all those products of nature which contribute to enhance the effect of scenes of this description.

Indeed, where sufficient space is allowed, and nature has been propitious in disposing of the ground for the purpose, and has kindly contributed the material elements which in landscape scenery serve to make up imaginative prospects; there appears to be no reason why the invention and ingenuity of man, which have accomplished such prodigious feats of imaginative power in the other arts, should not here second, or rather follow the efforts of nature, walking in her footsteps, and thus raising landscape gardening to the level of the other arts, by developing its entire capacity for the loftiest artistical efforts, even in that noble department now under discussion.

On the whole, we may conclude, to whatever branch of art we apply for illustration, that as art itself is the sublimest of studies, so the employment of art in imaginative creation is, of all its vast efforts, the highest and the most celestial. Its achievements here have been, moreover, at once the most stupendous and the most complete. It is to its success here that it mainly owes its exalted rank as an intellectual pursuit. And to this noble end have ever been consecrated the powers of those whose genius in either department has been most resplendent.

CHAPTER XIII.

BRITISH ART IN THE RETROSPECT.

I. THE origin of art in any nation is coeval with the commencement of civilization; and in the case of every individual with the first dawn of intelligence, he begins to exert his mind in artistical effort. Wherever taste, or even passion or emotion are stimulated, there art at once developes itself. Earlier than the foundation of cities, and long ere temples of any kind were upraised, the principles of art were felt and acknowledged and acted upon. In this country, indeed, long before London was founded, painting sculpture and architecture were practically followed. While this great city, which is now the metropolis of the world, was nothing more than a group of savage huts, when the wolf roamed where in future ages the Tower was to be raised, and the eagle hovered over the spot which was destined to be the site of St. Paul's, poetry and eloquence had established their dominion in England. The majestic Thames in its crystal stream reflected on its bosom the rude temples and uncouth edifices standing amid dense forests which clothed its banks, around which rustic enclosures were formed for the protection and preservation of such choice plants and flowers as their simple requirements or tastes urged the fierce inhabitants to cultivate. 'In spots where at present stately edifices are raised, and where the hum only of human voices is now heard, once the bittern screamed, or the heron fluttered, in almost unbroken solitude. Before a line of England's proud history was recorded, lofty rhapsodies of poetry were composed

by its rude warriors; and amidst its dense forests, wild strains of music were sung by its rustic bards.

In every country, as already stated,* the progress of art affords the truest picture of the intellectual growth of the nation. Among each people these arts germinated and sprang up; and before castles were erected or cathedrals were founded, solemn groves and august temples of rock were formed. Ere the Roman had planted his foot on British shores, painting in an uncouth fashion had been resorted to to decorate the persons of the natives, for whose rude, but not unpicturesque costume, the objects in nature most readily to be met with afforded the simple materials. And thus early did their woods and caverns echo afar the unstudied notes of melody. Imposing monumental trophies served to exhibit their savage ingenuity, and stimulated the first efforts in sculpture and architecture. Their wild eloquence too was often exerted in full fervour; and in their fierce games the foundations of dramatic art were laid. Their very barbarism gave force and vigour to their artistic efforts, passion added to their effect, and the savage and unholy rites which were exercised, midst the dire conflagrations that illumined the gloomy recesses of their dense oaken forests, called forth and exhibited to the full the contortions of each terrible emotion.

Thus, far more ancient than civilization, art first established itself, and by degrees expanded and grew up. Older than learning, it aided the progress of knowledge; the mother of refinement, it first gave polish to the rude efforts of science.

In this, as in every other country,† the arts were dependent for their progress on two main causes:—1. The peculiar character and genius of the people. 2. Their intercourse with other civilized nations. Art in England was materially affected by both these circumstances. The arts originally invented here were modified by the influence of foreign taste. And those arts which were imported here from foreign lands, were modified by the influence of the national taste. This is perhaps the case alike with regard to the nation itself, and the individuals of whom it is composed.

* *Vide ante*, Vol. I. Chapter IV. Sect. 9. † *Ibid.* Sect. 2.

II. The earliest account of the practice of painting in this country is that afforded by Cæsar, who describes the mode in which the primeval inhabitants were wont to adorn their persons by painting on their skins representations of the sun moon and stars, and other devices, for which they used the juices of different plants. As living human flesh is by no means a favourable or an inviting material on which to exercise pictorial skill, we may infer that certain other substances were used as well, and that the art was generally cultivated, whatever might be the amount of manual dexterity in its pursuit which was then attained. We possess, however, at the present no remains of paintings of this early period, although of the achievements of the Anglo-Saxons in this respect, several remains are preserved in the missals of that era. And whatever improvement the Anglo-Saxons may have derived from an acquaintance with Greek art, or the instructions of foreign artists, an independent school for the illumination of manuscripts appears to have existed in Ireland as early as the sixth century; and the perfection to which the Anglo-Saxons had arrived in this branch of painting at the beginning of the eighth, is sufficiently proved by many existing manuscripts, particularly Cuthbert's gospels, the work of Eadfrid, Bishop of Lindisfarne, who came to that See in 698.* Although we cannot distinctly trace the progress of this art, it may be inferred from various circumstances that it continued in a flourishing and improving state from the eighth to the tenth and eleventh centuries, which were very prolific in Anglo-Saxon works of calligraphy and illumination.† The drawing in some of these missals displays no little proficiency; the draperies especially are full of grace and intelligence, and the decorations, which are in a style altogether peculiar to the Anglo-Saxon school, exhibit bold and rich masses of foliage not to be surpassed either in composition or execution by any contemporary productions of the same class. The expression, too, is often very forcible. Stubbs in the 'Actus Pontificum Eboracensium' speaks of a magnificent "heaven" executed in gold and colours under Archbishop Aldred shortly before the Conquest. And the Saxon ladies were reputed eminently skilful in the art

* Pictorial Hist. England, vol. i. † *Ibid.*

of embroidery, and executed patterns and designs of various kinds in drapery.

In Alfred's reign, before York and Canterbury were adorned with pictures and tapestry, in the tenth century, Etherilda adorned Ely Cathedral with a series of historical pictures in memory of her husband Birthwood.

The famous Bayeux tapestry, representing the different events in the Norman invasion and the death of Harold, may be also referred to as a graphic production of this time, and is still to be seen, in an excellent state of preservation in the Hôtel de Ville at Bayeux.

Before the middle of the thirteenth century historical painting appears to have been practised in England among the higher classes. All the king's rooms as well as his chapel were thus decorated.

In 1350 were commenced the pictures and designs in St. Stephen's Chapel; and it is curious to see in all the accounts, observes our celebrated historical painter Haydon, the continual allusions to oil painting. The artists employed, he remarks, must certainly have been men of distinguished talent, who had the power of ordering inferior artists to assist them. The most celebrated of their number appears to have been Hugh de St. Alban's, who was appointed by the king as his principal painter.

The compositions, principally in fresco, with which our cathedrals and churches of this early period were adorned, were, however, in general, very rudely executed. The figures were incorrectly drawn, and no attention to composition was displayed. Indeed, it must be acknowledged that, in many instances they possessed but a very distant, and in no respect flattering resemblance to the objects they were intended to represent. The faces of the persons portrayed were altogether destitute of expression, the limbs were without proportion or symmetry, and the drapery was stiff and unnatural. Even portraits in the early stages of the art, were very rude grim grotesque and deathlike in their appearance, and the draperies were generally stiff and unnatural.

The illustration of missals and of books of chivalry, was,

however, at an early period a favourite pursuit among many of the higher ranks in this country, as well as with the monks, and served to advance the art of painting in this line. Some of these performances were very beautifully executed, with brilliant colours, excellence in which is at least one important branch of pictorial art. Constant attention to and exercise in these designs, would necessarily produce mechanical skill. Several of these works are preserved in the British Museum.

During the reign of Henry III. the embellishment of our cathedrals and palaces was promoted, and foreign artists were employed for this purpose. Saints and legends and historical compositions were, as it were, manufactured in a rude style, the figures being misshapen and out of proportion, and altogether destitute of grace and beauty. War and civil dissension seem to have had their due share of influence in England in retarding the progress of art, even in its rude and infant state. During the reigns of Edward I. and Edward II. the arts appear to have been neglected, and no account of their progress is preserved. But in the reign of Edward III. painting and sculpture, and also poetry and architecture, received encouragement and advanced. Representations and descriptions in them, however, of this period, imbibed something of the warlike spirit of the age. A composition in painting on wood, in part historical and in part allegorical, representing Henry V. and certain of his relatives, was produced during the reign of that Sovereign.*

In the 25th of Edward III. in the rolls of the Exchequer, 26th September, 1351, there is a charge to "William of Padyngton, for making twenty angels to stand in the tabernacles, by task-work at 6*s.* 8*d.* for each image, £6. 13*s.* 4*d.*"

In the early stages of painting, and, indeed, as late as the time of Henry VIII. an artist of even first-rate powers in his day was looked upon as a mere mechanic. Works of art were bargained for and measured out like commercial articles; pictures were done by contract, and paid for by the square yard. Very curious documents are now extant relative to agreements made for the execution of works of this description. In the

* Cunningham's 'Lives of British Painters.'

fifteenth century we are informed of a contract which the Earl of Warwick made with his tailor for the painter's work to be displayed in the pageantry of his embassy to France. Among the items in this artist's bill is one "for a grete streamer for the ship of xi yerdes length and viii yerdes of brede, with a grete bere and gryfon holding a ragged staffe, poudred fule of ragged staves, and for a grete crosse of St. George; for the lymning and portraying £1. 6*s.* 8*d.*"* This age, indeed, produced little beyond mere decorative painting. To this period, however, belongs a famous painting of the 'Dance of Death,' which was executed in the cloister of St. Paul's, and which is supposed to have furnished the prototype of Holbein's celebrated design.†

The art of painting, but more especially that of portrait painting, rose during the reign of Henry VIII. Holbein, who particularly excelled in this branch, came over to England at that time, and was the principal painter employed by the court. Many of his productions remain among us at this day. The paintings of Holbein correspond in their character and quality with contemporaneous performances in the other arts. They are stiff and formal and motionless; but they are at the same time intensely expressive and forcible, full of character and feeling, and wonderfully true to nature. In some of his historical compositions he displays great power of invention and imagination. Allusion has already been made to his 'Dead Christ' at Basle.‡ Efforts in sculpture poetry and eloquence, and in costume also of the same period, will be found to be correspondingly characterized. With the grace and refinement of a more advanced era of civilization, we have lost much of the vigour and energy and striking effect which distinguished these earlier performances in each of the arts. As regards the paintings of the period now under consideration, it would appear, however, that from foreigners art of each kind in this country received an impetus, independent of the natural taste and skill of the nation. Allegorical pictures were also much admired at that time; and the execution of designs on tapestry served to encourage the actual practice, and to advance the art of painting

* Walpole's 'Anecdotes of Painting.' † Pict. Hist. Eng., book v.

‡ *Vide ante*, Chapter X. Sect. 11.

itself, however it may have tended to degenerate its style. During the reign of Queen Elizabeth, a representation was made in tapestry of the defeat of the Spanish Armada, which was considered very spirited and very fine, and which, before the destruction of the Houses of Parliament in 1834 adorned the walls of the House of Lords.

Rubens, Vandyke, and several other very eminent painters, subsequently visited this country; but the art does not appear to have been established by them, although they left among us many of their works. Nor can we regard their productions actually brought forth here as proofs of the talent of the English School; of the mind and taste and genius of the nation. Several splendid paintings were also then imported, which remain among us to this day. The Cartoons were brought into England from Italy, in the time of Charles I., so that there was then a taste for art alive in the nation much in advance of the power of our artists. The early illustrations which were produced at the close of the seventeenth century for popular imaginative works, such as Milton's 'Paradise Lost' and Bunyan's 'Pilgrim's Progress' evince, nevertheless, by the rude and barbarous compositions which they present, that the common principles of the art had not then become engrafted in our soil.

Sir James Thornhill, who lived about the beginning of the last century, and whose designs still continue to ornament the cupola of St. Paul's, was the first artist worthy of being classed as an historical painter that England produced. His performances are spirited, and display considerable feeling, and extensive knowledge of epic composition. Sir Joshua Reynolds must, however, be regarded as the actual founder of the English school of painting. He it was who, first among our native painters pointed out the real end and great capacities of this art, and who laid down principles for its regulation which were calculated to raise it to the loftiest station among intellectual pursuits. Through him an academy was established for promoting the study of painting sculpture and architecture; thus making these arts a branch of national study, and affording a national testimony to their importance. Sir Joshua Reynolds, although

his Discourses read before the Academy relate principally to the highest branches of the art, and to the principles of epic and imaginative composition, followed portrait painting almost exclusively, occasionally making attempts in historical design. These have not, however, I think really contributed to his renown, but have rather served to evince that his devotion to portrait painting had disqualified him for success in the higher walks of the art, and that his genius and imagination had been cramped by this means. His compositions appear stiff and formal, and his figures have too much the appearance of portraits. His representations of persons in historical characters are, nevertheless, many of them very admirable, and a masterpiece in this style was his picture of 'Mrs. Siddons as the Tragic Muse.' The portraits by Sir Joshua Reynolds display not only the features and outward form of the individuals, but they describe them with all the intellectual expression and character and feeling which distinguished them.

It has been matter of regret among many, that men possessed of the genius and power, the knowledge of human nature and human passions, and the capacities so strikingly to describe what they saw and felt, which have characterized certain of our most distinguished artists who have occupied themselves in portrait painting; should have devoted their lives and their energies to the study of this particular branch of art, to the neglect of that nobler and more ambitious department of it, where full scope for the display of their talents would have been afforded. Some of them have, moreover, evinced capacity and genius for original composition, and corresponding feelings of admiration for the noblest works of art. Sir Joshua Reynolds also displayed in his Discourses a perfect knowledge of the principles of the epic. From these circumstances we may reasonably infer that, had they devoted themselves to the pursuit of the highest walk in the arts, they might have produced works in that branch as great, comparatively, as those which they have left to us in that inferior one which they followed. In this case, however, would posterity, and their countrymen in general, have been benefited by the change? From the choice which they made, the present, and all succeeding generations, will

have the opportunity of viewing and forming correct notions of the portraits of all the great characters that have adorned the page of history contemporaneously with any of these renowned painters. We seem thus to retain among us, not only their works and their remembrance, but their very persons.

Portrait painting not merely preserves to us the effigies of the eminent men, and of the valued friends that we have lost, but enables us to retain in our minds an exact remembrance of them, with all the vigour and animation which they displayed in life. Many of the portraits by Reynolds and Lawrence, and Gainsborough, too, although this artist is mainly admired as an exquisite painter of rural scenes, must be considered equal, if not superior, to any works of this kind, even by the most renowned of the old masters, and that in the highest characteristics with which such performances can be endowed. England has, indeed, been doubly fortunate, not only in having produced in the last age painters so well fitted to hand down to posterity the resemblance of her illustrious departed, but in possessing illustrious characters truly worthy of being so handed down.

Nor, considered merely in itself, must we rank the art of portrait painting as it was practised by such men as Sir Joshua Reynolds, so far below the highest walk in painting as an intellectual art. To be enabled to dive, as it were, into the very soul of the individual who is to be represented, to seize at once upon his character and expression and manner, and to transplant these to the canvas, are the efforts of men endowed with no common degree of knowledge of human nature, and with no ordinary portion of observation and skill.

Among the works that have been produced in this country in the historical branch of painting, those of Mr. West, who succeeded Sir Joshua Reynolds as president of the Royal Academy, are well worthy of attention. The compositions of this renowned artist are distinguished by great vigour and grandeur in conception, and much force and truth in expression; and some of them almost rival in dignity and mental power, if not in manual execution, the performances of the celebrated masters of old.

The portraits of Sir Thomas Lawrence, who succeeded Mr. West in the presidency of the Royal Academy, were in many respects held to rival those of Sir Joshua Reynolds, in that intellectual expression and vigour which so distinguished the performances of the latter. In the portrayal of female beauty, and in the representation of children, he was perhaps even his superior; and several of his male portraits also are masterpieces in the art of the highest order.

The classical designs of Barry, who was, moreover, a distinguished writer and critic upon art, and the historical productions of Northcote, Opie, and other eminent artists, deserve also here to be recorded. In some of the wild and imaginative compositions of Fuseli, in which character and feeling are very forcibly described, and full effect and vigour are infused into the representation, several of Shakspeare's most vivid conceptions have been successfully depicted upon canvas, and with all the life and energy of the reality.

Nor ought we to omit all mention of the compositions of the incomparable Hogarth, whose productions have indeed already been referred to in another chapter, as illustrations of the satirical and humorous in design.* In genuine humour, certainly more refined and in some respects more natural, Hogarth has been rivalled, if not excelled by Wilkie. Of domestic and pastoral and everyday scenes we have had many excellent painters, whose performances have been distinguished alike for their simple beauty, their exquisite feeling, and their fidelity to nature.

The historical compositions of Mr. Martin, must be reckoned in many respects for extraordinary imaginative power, for vigour and grandeur of description, for wonderful perspective knowledge, and for the striking effect which they attain, as among the most remarkable and original artistical productions of modern days. His pictures, considered merely as such, in mechanical execution, are inferior to many; the colouring is unnatural, and the drawing is incorrect. His works might be referred to as forcible examples both of the breach, and of the result produced by the observance, of several of the most

* *Vide ante*, Vol. I. Chapter VIII. Sect. 9.

important principles of art. In this respect, and perhaps in certain others, he might be compared to Shakspeare, of whose genius it was observed by a great writer,* that it was "genius shooting wild, and that it was doubtful whether his faults or his beauties were greatest." Mr. Martin seems to have invented a style of his own, in which none can rival or even approach him. Many would deny him to be worthy of holding a place among the epic painters, as in the delineation of human character and passion, the noblest aim of this branch of the art, he is not only very deficient, but has hardly ever attempted it, and it is as a landscape-painter that he must be regarded. Yet there is no one in our age who has represented with such effect and power those grand and wild and supernatural scenes which it is the peculiar province of the highest branch in the art of painting to describe.

In landscape painting we have produced several eminent artists, especially in water colours, which, as regards its invention, and the excellence to which it has been carried, may be considered as a peculiarly English art.

In water-colour drawings, indeed, English artists particularly excel, especially in the representation of landscape scenery; and in this department the moderns have no doubt decidedly and far exceeded the ancients. In tints, and in perspective more especially, they are considerably their superiors. In the portrayal of scenes of still life as regards animal painting, both in water colours and in oils, the productions of the moderns, especially those of Sir Edward Landseer, have also surpassed the ancients; but in depicting active animal life, the earlier painters, especially Snyders, and the ancient Greek sculptors, as exemplified by the Elgin Marbles, are no less certainly our rivals.

In landscape painting in oils, as well as in water colours, the moderns, particularly the English school, appear decidedly to surpass the ancients, and here we are superior to the artists of every other country, more especially as regards colouring, and light and shade. In portrait painting also, in the present day, the English excel the Continental artists, however their

* Dryden.

productions may fall below those of the portrait painters—the Vandykes and Knellers, and Lelys and Reynoldses—of former ages.

Among the landscape painters of this country, Turner must undoubtedly be acknowledged to be one of the most remarkable, if not the most renowned. It is nevertheless in mechanical rather than in mental efforts that he has succeeded; and it must be admitted that he is as inferior to Martin in the latter, as he is superior to him in the former. In manual excellence it is, in certain departments only, that his skill is displayed, more especially in prismatic effects, and in portraying certain hues and tints. Indeed, the true and fair position which I shall assign to Turner, and which a just and discerning and impartial posterity will, I believe, accord to him, is this. He is not, as has been asserted, the greatest landscape painter who ever lived, or even who has adorned this country; and he is far inferior generally, and in their highest qualities, to either Claude, Salvator Rosa, Wilson, or Gainsborough. To Martin he is superior in mechanical skill, although far his inferior in imagination and mental power generally, as also in perspective effect. Turner's merits consist really and solely in his power of representing with wonderful truth and vigour certain prismatic results, the appearance of mist and spray, as also of water when agitated, the rays of the sun when it is declining, and the varied appearance of the sky. In many respects he was unrivalled here, especially as a painter of clouds. But beyond this, he can only be allowed to rank with other artists.

There can be no doubt, indeed, that by a painter of high poetic genius, landscape scenery may be invested with a degree of intellectual interest and character, and even expression, and may be capacitated to call forth the most vivid feelings, and to excite the imagination almost equally with the productions of the epic. This we have, in fact, seen to be the case with Salvator Rosa and Claude, and Wilson and Gainsborough, and above all with Martin. But Turner, although in some of his pictures he occasionally ventured upon attempts of this kind, appears to me to be generally in this respect far below

the great painters that I have mentioned, if indeed, even in his highest efforts, he has ever even approached them.

As landscape painting seems to be peculiarly the walk in which the English excel, especially in the present age; the dwelling so extensively, indeed so exclusively on the importance of tints and light and shade, and the effects of sunbeams and mists, and other peculiar features of nature, which distinguishes the writings of certain artistical critics of the present day, is no doubt very applicable, and very essential to landscape painting, however misplaced as regards epic and other compositions of that high class. My aim in the present work is rather to recommend the infusion of intellectual characteristics as regards passion and expression and imagination, into landscape composition,—as has been successfully and indeed completely effected in the productions of Salvator Rosa, and Claude, and Martin, and some other artists,—than to limit the higher walks of art to the ordinary objects within the scope of that department of painting.

Our skill in science has indeed enabled us to carry to a very high degree of perfection, in its various departments, the art of engraving, a good and complete history of the rise and progress of which would constitute a very valuable addition to our artistic and scientific literature. Engraving is, indeed, calculated to have an important influence in advancing the arts generally, especially as by this means the mind of the painting is capable of being fully translated, and copies of the work may be widely diffused.

By the aid, moreover, of this branch of art, not only can a painting be faithfully copied, or rather translated; but from the number of impressions which can be taken from the plate, a very large amount of care and labour and skill may be expended on each work, so as to render it as complete as possible. The same degree of pain and attention may, in fact, be devoted to the plate itself, that might have been bestowed on all the impressions together which are produced from it, considering them each as separate independent works of art, and far beyond what was allowed to the original painting.

The science of photography has also, in our day, greatly

aided the copying of paintings and statues, as also the obtaining of correct and literal portraits of living characters. On the other hand, it must be confessed that, in this latter respect, photography presents to us not the soul-gifted man, but the form only, void of vitality and of soul. It is not nature, but the ghost of nature that it brings before you. Phantom-like it is pale and stiff, and cold and colourless, destitute of either blood in the veins, fire in the eyes, or glow in the cheeks; a dreary contrast, not only to the living man himself, but to the almost animate representations which sprang from the genius of a Vandyke, a Reynolds, and a Lawrence.

III. Although the material resorted to for sculptural efforts, is considerably more durable than that which is used for pictorial representations, we have very few remains of works in this art prior to the period of the Anglo-Saxons. The only exceptions are some rude devices on certain Druidical temples, more particularly in Brittany, but the representations on which are so obscure that it is difficult to say whether cyphers or figures of real beings were intended to be described. Some of the weapons and drinking-vessels of the ancient Britons were rudely carved, of which we have also a few remains. The huge wicker idols in which they sacrificed victims, may perhaps be ranked among their sculptural efforts. In wicker-work generally they were extremely skilful.

Our churches in the time of the Saxons were adorned with carving and statues, many of which were in the rudest style, and the heads and figures in general very uncouth. Nevertheless, our great painter and artistical writer Haydon informs us that in Edward the Confessor's reign there were executed bas-reliefs as good as anything done at that time in Europe, and by no means deficient in grace, though disproportional, and unskilful in composition. In one of these there is a king in bed, leaning upon his hand; which in an improved style, says Haydon, might be made a fine thing. On several ancient churches may be seen representations in sculpture, effected during this period, of the Last Judgment. The figures are rudely carved in rough stone and of misshapen limbs, and the dead are rising out of their graves, and near them

are allegorical designs of death and hell and the grave. These forms are stiff and ill-proportioned, and no harmony or beauty in the composition can be discerned. Certain of the monumental figures in some of our churches executed during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, are in this rude style; and by observation of these works produced at different periods, we are enabled to trace the gradual rise and progress of this art. By degrees we find the effigies on the monuments more correctly and more gracefully designed and sculptured. Some of the productions of this class which were effected in this country so early as the thirteenth century, possess sufficient merit to have excited the admiration of Flaxman. He remarks with regard to these sculptures in general, that, although owing to the disadvantages under which such works were produced in that age, they are necessarily ill-drawn and deficient in principle, yet in parts there is a beautiful simplicity, an irresistible sentiment, and sometimes a grace excelling more modern productions. He also argues from the contemporary state of the arts in Italy, that these statues are entirely due to native artists; but whether many of the best works of this period were not executed by foreign artists appears to admit of great doubt.*

Some of the sculptural figures produced at the commencement of the last century, as seen in the monumental effigies of that period, were very fairly designed; the limbs are in general well shaped, and the folds of the drapery display some grace in the disposition of it. The compositions of Roubillac, who carried the art a step further, and whose works possessed all the spirit and effect of the rude efforts before alluded to, with much of the polish and grace of more modern productions, evince considerable imaginative power, and the figures themselves are both correct and natural. Bacon's performances possess much real grace, and some of his female figures are exquisitely beautiful. More refined elegant and dignified, his works are nevertheless less striking than those of certain of his predecessors.

* Walpole's Anecdotes. Flaxman's Lectures.

But the greatest of our sculptors was Flaxman, who possessed a mind deeply imbued with the highest principles of his pursuit, and extensively refined and cultivated by classic study. With the masterpieces of ancient art he was also well acquainted. In his productions grandeur and beauty are combined together, although they are especially distinguished for the latter quality. He is perhaps, however, more famous for his designs than for his having executed any particular great works of sculpture. This was of course mainly owing to want of patronage. His illustrations of the Iliad, and of Dante, are among the most beautiful and grand and imaginative compositions that have been produced, either in painting or sculpture in this country. Later sculptors, more especially Chantrey and Gibson, have also executed performances which have done credit to the British school. Nevertheless, in sculpture as in painting, statues and busts, which correspond to portraits, instead of original designs, have mainly occupied the attention of our artists, and to this has the general patronage of the art been almost confined.

IV. It will be necessarily more difficult to trace the origin of poetry in a nation than that of the other arts to which I have referred, inasmuch as the vehicle in which poetry is existent not being durable, it is almost impossible to preserve specimens of it during successive ages.

Of ancient British poetry we possess no remains, and no distinct account. We have, however, still extant, several pieces of Anglo-Saxon poetry, compositions in which are more or less marked by alliteration, by a mixture of regular and irregular cadence, by abrupt transitions, by a frequent omission of the particles, and by an artificial inversion of words and phrases. It was not until a late period that compositions of this class were set into regular rhyme.*

The English language prior to the time of Edward I. appears to have been in a very crude state; but some improvement is discernible in the next reign. Specimens of early composition in poetry in this country have been cited in a previous chapter.†

* Kemble's 'Anglo-Saxons.' Pict. Hist. Eng.

† *Vide antè*, Vol. I. Chapter III. Sect. 4.

To Chaucer principally our language owes the foundation of its still enduring constitution, as well as the whole body of our poetry much of its peculiar and characteristic spirit. He is by general consent styled the father of English poetry. The numerous extracts from his productions and those of Spenser afforded in the previous chapters, and the comments upon them, preclude the necessity of now enlarging upon their many and characteristic merits. Following Chaucer, Spenser yet further advanced the art of poetry in this country as regards its refinement, and the exhibition of its capabilities, and displayed in his productions the highest genius and beauty and imaginative power. Shakspeare, by his immortal productions, has evinced to the full of what high efforts the art of poetry is capable, as also the adaptation of the English language for such undertakings.

The sublime production of Milton rivals the noblest achievements in epic composition effected by pictorial art. In the survey of the history of poetry in England, we may, however, observe, what I have already remarked with respect to painting that the middle age of its progress is the era of its highest eminence in epic grandeur. In the case alike of painting sculpture poetry and also eloquence, indeed, of the arts in general, the character of the art both changes with and reflects that of the particular time in which the art was practised. Hence the whole style and cast of the poetry of the period of Queen Elizabeth, was very different to what we find in the poetry of the period of Queen Victoria. We have not only no poet of the genius of Shakspeare in our day, but no poet who possesses his spirit, his fire, his originality, his passion, or his imagination. These are the characteristics of a ruder age, and are seldom to be found in one of high refinement and luxury. The grandeur and sublimity of Milton are still less in accordance with the effeminacy of modern taste. These loftier characteristics, indeed, appear to have been gradually giving way to refinement, and to a certain degree of grace and beauty as well, it must be admitted, ever since the comparatively rude days when Milton flourished. The poets who here came after him have been far

less bold and imaginative, but have possessed more polish, and the versification has been more smooth and elegant. Foremost amongst these Pope and Dryden deserve to be mentioned, whose performances have added so richly to our literary stores.

In our own time the poets who have chiefly commanded the attention of the public have been distinguished alike by the grace and refinement and general correctness of their compositions; while here and there, in certain of their productions, passages of vigour and originality worthy of the brightest days of the art are to be traced, evincing that, as already remarked in a previous chapter,* genius and poetic feeling belong to no one age exclusively beyond another. But to the works of living artists in either department no allusion is of course here intended to be made.

V. Of the early exhibitions of eloquence in this country we possess scarcely any remains, although some faint shadows have been preserved of its efforts in the accounts transmitted of the bold and manly address of Caractacus when brought before the Roman Emperor, and of Queen Boadicea's spirited oration to her valiant generals. Among the Anglo-Saxon chronicles we have a few specimens of the style of writing and expression in those times, which is also exhibited in the successive missals from that period until a comparatively modern era.

What was remarked with regard to the progress and formation of the English language in respect to poetry, applies equally well to the case of prose composition.

The rise and progress of the art of eloquence, in this, as in most other countries, has, indeed, been necessarily, to a large extent mainly dependent on the progress of civilization, by which the advancement of a language is extensively influenced, as I have already remarked with respect to poetry. Like the art of poetry, eloquence also, in many respects, flourished chiefly as regards vigour and grandeur of description in the middle ages of society, when men's feelings were expressed with more freedom and vehemence, and their passions were more frequently and openly excited, and also less kept in subjection. The style of early English writers,—of Sir Thomas

* *Vide ante*, Vol. I. Chapter IV. Sect. 4.

More, Lord Bacon, Sir Matthew Hale, Sir Thomas Browne, and Hobbes,—was much more terse and vigorous than that of the present or preceding centuries. In grace and refinement, later ages shine more. Periods of excitement in any nation are also found to be those when oratory flourishes most, as it is then principally that people's passions and energies are raised, that the grandest occasions for the exercise of oratory are afforded, and the greatest freedom of expression is indulged in. Oratory is indeed the artillery of the soul, which times of political and social convulsion ever call into action, and summon from repose. Eloquence may then be said to have its full share of patronage, and like the other arts it is, of course, in many respects dependent upon this circumstance. Thus, in our own country, the gigantic struggles which preceded the protectorate of Oliver Cromwell, produced a Pym, a Hampden, and a Strafford, whose style as regards vigour and freedom has never been exceeded, and is in marked contrast to the more polished and refined productions of our day. From the period lately spoken of to the present time, the pulpit, the bar, and the senate have each contributed liberally to enrich the pages of our forensic literature; and orations, in all their loftier intellectual characteristics rivalling not only the productions of our poets, but in many respects the noblest efforts of Grecian and Roman eloquence, have been produced, far superior indeed to contemporaneous artistical efforts in painting and sculpture.

For examples of British eloquence of each kind, and of the highest order, we may refer to the speeches of Lord Bolingbroke, Lord Chatham, Lord Mansfield, Lord Erskine, Lord Brougham, Mr. Burke, Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Curran, Mr. Canning, and other great men too numerous to specify here, whose efforts not only enchanted the generation which witnessed their productions, but which will remain to all succeeding ages the most splendid and the most suitable monuments to their genius which they could have desired to be raised.

I will, nevertheless, venture to assert that the purest and fairest samples of genuine eloquence are to be found, not in the speeches of our patriots, nor even in the sermons of our celebrated preachers, but in the pages of our philosophers,

and in the essays of our critical writers;—our Addisons, our Johnsons, and our Macaulays. The study has here eclipsed the senate, and the pen has been wielded with more power than the oratory of the forum. The noblest efforts of the soul are better evinced, and the result of its deepest cogitations are more fully brought out in the quiet solitude of the closet, or the undisturbed retirement of meditation, than in the turbulent encounter of political debate, or the fierce combat of party animosity. Although its grandest exploits are displayed during the storm of forensic fury, or the thunders of senatorial encounters; yet in the quiet streams and luxuriant shades of critical and historical composition, the soul most delights to exhibit her rich stores, and to put forth her choicest blossoms. Nature, indeed, everywhere assumes her loveliest aspect, not in the shade but in the sunshine; not on the barren rock, but in the verdant glen.

VI. Music is, perhaps, of all the arts, that of which the origin and first introduction into any nation are most difficult exactly to trace, inasmuch as it leaves no memento or relic like nearly every other art; while a more advanced and perfect performance, at once supersedes and obliterates that which had preceded it. Both poetry and eloquence may obtain some permanent remembrance from their becoming engraven on our political or social records, and may be preserved in after ages to be appealed to as mementos of the condition or state of feeling in a nation at that time.

Of ancient British music we have no distinct memorial, and no very clear account. All that we know with certainty respecting it is that among the earliest inhabitants of this island, as among all other rude and warlike people, music and song were practised at their religious and martial ceremonies, and that particular officers, termed bards, were selected and maintained for this purpose. Music, we are also told, was cultivated with much ardour in this country from a very early date in the Anglo-Saxon period.

Musical compositions independent in themselves, and unaccompanied by poetry, did not, however, commence very early. In this, as in other nations for many ages, music was practised

only as an accompaniment to poetry, and in union with the services of the Church. Yet no remains, we are informed, are to be found up to the fifteenth century of what can be strictly termed a British musical composition; and it is said that no English dance-tune has been discovered prior to the year 1400, although dancing was prevalent in this country from the remotest times.* Early in the fifteenth century, however, and towards its close, English music began to take a form in which, although in the rudest state, something like modern melody and harmony is distinguishable.

How far our numerous warlike expeditions contributed to advance or to influence this art, does not appear. From very early times armies were attended by bands of music, and songs of triumph were composed for the celebration of victories. Of these the musical performance which was used as an accompaniment to the song of triumph after the victory of Agincourt in rude vigorous strains,† is supposed to be the first regular musical composition in this country of which we have any remains.

The Church early afforded ample patronage for this art, and encouraged musicians from foreign nations, more advanced in civilization than the natives of our land, to come over and seek employment here. Music being moreover under the conduct of the priesthood, who were much beyond their age in learning, was not dependent on the general state of civilization in the nation. And it was during these early ages, as in the other arts, that some of the finest and most sublime creations of the art were brought forth. In later times, however, several distinguished artists in this branch have been produced in this country, although for most of our really grand music we have been indebted to foreigners. Indeed, of all the arts, music is probably that which affords the smallest test of, as it is the least dependent upon the general condition of art in any nation, or the degree of cultivation which it has received among the people, as of all the arts it is the most easily imported. Variation even in language is no impediment here, as it is in many cases a fatal one to poetry and eloquence.

* Sir J. Hawkins's 'History of Music.'

† *Vide ante*, Vol. I. Chapter III. Sect. 4.

Perhaps, indeed, most of the music, especially of the highest kind, now in use in this country is either foreign, or was composed for words in a different language to ours.

VII. It is not in reality much more easy to trace accurately the origin of architecture in our land, than that of the other arts, inasmuch as, although certain rude efforts in the art were effected by the earliest inhabitants of this isle, some specimens of which still remain; yet that which formed the real foundation of architecture was imported into this country from others, and from time to time received an impulse from them. The rise and growth of this art may, nevertheless, be traced with the greatest facility and accuracy, on account of the durability of the specimens which are preserved. It is, moreover, ever in a state of progression and mutation, and is affected by every variety of circumstance that may arise.

Representations are still existent of the huts used by the ancient Britons, circular in form with pointed roofs. Of the rude British temples which were erected in this country at the very earliest period of its history, we have the remains in Stonehenge and Amesbury, as also in other parts of the country. In Brittany these relics are still more perfect and more extensive, and serve well to exhibit the nature of those once raised in this country. The introduction of Christianity not only caused the destruction of many of these edifices which were intended for idolatrous worship, but with Christianity was introduced the art of architecture in an advanced state, and churches were erected by its propagators after the style of those at Rome. Some of the Saxon temples constructed for Pagan worship were however, we are told, converted into Christian churches. These buildings were most of them in the first instance made of wood. As the arts of civilization progressed, stone was more generally used; and as the taste of the country improved, or as artists from Rome and other countries where the art was in a more perfect condition visited us, these buildings were erected with greater skill and refinement, and more attention to ornament was bestowed upon them; and thus, in the manner I have described in some of the preceding chapters, various styles were introduced.

In the Anglo-Saxon missals, very accurate representations are preserved of the houses and other domestic buildings, as well as of the churches and castles of this period.

From the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries, Gothic architecture prevailed over the greater part of Europe. It may be seen in a constant state of change and transition and progression, variously affected and modified as to its peculiar features and style by different circumstances. The period of the thirteenth century is that of its nearest approach to general uniformity. It then diverged into various national characteristics, which are nowhere more strongly or more distinctively marked than in England; and finally, when a classical style of building was revived as if by common consent among nations, each arrived at its object by a different path.*

As civilization gradually progressed, architecture, with the other arts, advanced in its career; and in this country towns and cities adorned with churches and public buildings, and castles and halls and mansions, in time uprose. Like the varying scenes in a dissolving view, the whole face of the country became by degrees changed from a wild forest and a dreary morass, to a cultivated district, animate with population, and intent on improvement.

The stupendous magnificence of some of our cathedrals and churches in the early times, bear honourable testimony both to the taste and munificence of those days. In later ages, however, artists of very extensive genius in this department, have been produced. Inigo Jones and Sir Christopher Wren, whose name must ever live in the admiration of every one who views his sublime and stupendous structure St. Paul's Cathedral,—in its exterior at least far more classical and more picturesque than St. Peter's at Rome,—may be referred to here.

The grand national edifices of any nation cannot, however, be correctly referred to as tests of the condition of architecture among the people, because not their ordinary dwellings, but only certain public buildings are the *data* from which we here form our opinion. Over the construction of the latter the

* Pict. Hist. Eng., book iv. p. 852.

generality have no control; the erection of them is directed by a few, and is perhaps effected by foreign artists, or was attained by those of a preceding age.

From the important and leading nature of the ancient national buildings in this country, such as our cathedrals and abbeys and castles and halls, these edifices may, nevertheless, be fairly referred to as the best samples of the kind; although perhaps from their magnitude, and the wealth expended in their erection, they are less likely to have been executed by native artists.

VIII. The earliest efforts of the English drama are believed to have been either borrowed directly from Continental writers, or to have been composed by the Anglo-Norman clerks in the Gallic idiom. Long anterior to these, however, many of the religious or superstitious rites and ceremonies practised by the ancient Britons on great festal occasions, were of a highly dramatic character; and that both as regards the spectacle exhibited, and the actions of the performers. Religious dramas are supposed to have been regularly established performances in London about the year 1180; and it appears that in the middle of the thirteenth century, itinerant actors were well known in England.

Out of the religious drama sprang the moral plays, which were in a state of considerable advancement early in the reign of Henry VI. They seem to have reached their highest perfection under Henry VII., and their performance was not wholly discontinued until the end of Elizabeth's reign.

The first English dramatic production in which it was attempted to exhibit sketches from actual life, without any Scriptural saintly or allegorical intermixture, belongs to that class which were termed interludes, and appears to have been introduced during the reign of Henry VIII. The earliest English tragedy, properly so called, is supposed to have been written about the year 1561.* In the year 1583, Queen Elizabeth first allowed a public company of players to act under her name and authority.

The compositions of Shakspeare,—the artistic merits of

* Pict. Hist. Eng.

which having already been discussed, need not here be adverted to,—not only advanced, but carried at once to perfection dramatic writing. During the reign of Charles I., the fiery zeal of the Puritans prohibited theatrical entertainments altogether. In the reign of Charles II., when the drama was restored with the monarchy, essential improvements were introduced in the arrangements of the theatre, especially as regards decoration costume and music,* which at the present period have advanced still further with the general progress of art and of science.

The mechanical appliances auxiliary to dramatic representations, more particularly as regards the scenery, have indeed much improved in our day; although with respect to the essential features of the art itself, probably no great advance has been made during the last century. No nearer approach to nature in the representation has been effected; still less in the higher attainments of the art, has any progression been accomplished.

IX. To trace out accurately the original condition, rise, and progress through various stages, of costume in this country, would be a task of some difficulty, and would occupy considerable space. In a rude age this art originated here as in other countries. The ancient Britons painted their bodies with representations of the planets and other figures. The earliest costumes were made of the skins of wild beasts, or of the leaves of plants, which were at once resorted to to form the necessary coverings for the body. The manufacture and dyeing of cloths seem, however, to have been early known among us, which were probably brought from Gaul; and the cloth garments for some time retained the name which had been given to the hide. Ornaments of different kinds were gradually introduced, such as rings and bracelets. The two causes already referred to,—the influence of foreign art, and the progress of this nation in civilization,—would mainly contribute to accelerate the progress of costume. Probably the former of these causes had more direct, and more extensive influence in this country than the latter.

* Pict. Hist. Eng.

Among the Anglo-Saxons some variety and grace in costume appear to have been attained, especially in their ecclesiastical civil and military attire. At the period of the Conquest, we are told that the Norman dress had been so much imitated by the Anglo-Saxons, as to be scarcely distinguishable from it. Costliness in the material, and variety in the article of dress, much increased after this period. During the reign of Henry II., the sovereign and nobles are represented in full flowing robes, girded with a richly ornamented waistbelt, mantles fastened by fibulæ on the breast or on the shoulders, chausses or long hose, and shoes or boots, the latter sometimes beautifully embroidered, caps of various forms, and jewelled gloves. The manner and fashion of these different dresses underwent many changes during successive reigns, extravagant and costly variations being occasionally introduced, and successive improvements and modifications continually made.*

The general character and condition of costume in this country at different periods, as regards the taste and richness displayed in it, have corresponded pretty nearly with those of the other arts. Costume is not, however, so much actually dependent on foreign influence and example for its rise and improvement in this nation, as this nation is indebted to foreign countries, not merely for the improvement of its own art here, but for enabling us to import from abroad the productions of foreign artists. On this account the condition of costume is but an uncertain indication of the general condition of art; but although the costume of this country at any particular period may be in general use here, it may all be the production of a foreign nation.

The most faithful records of early costume, and of the various mutations which taste and chance and fashion have from time to time effected in it, are afforded by the illuminations in the missals of the middle ages, and by the paintings, especially portraits, from the earliest to the present period. Of all the arts, costume is the most fluctuating, and it is ever in a state of change, of which it is peculiarly susceptible, and for which

* Pict. Hist. Eng.

it depends in part on the taste of the people of each particular country, and in part on the influence of foreign nations. What there is here of taste, appears to be extensively directed by caprice; though, in turn, this very caprice may be more or less influenced by taste.

X. The earliest account of the formation of gardens in this country, consists in the description of the enclosures made by the ancient Britons near their huts and villages, for the purpose of procuring such vegetable productions as they ordinarily needed. Of the gardens of the Anglo-Saxons, and of the race who succeeded them, we have no record except what occasional slight representations in their missals afford. But it is stated by Fitzstephen that in the time of Henry II., the citizens of London had large and beautiful gardens attached to their villas. In the reign of Edward I., it may be collected from Hollinshed's Chronicle, that the cultivation of the garden was extended to the more curious and delicate productions; but the wars of York and Lancaster destroyed all these occupations, and gardens in general ceased to be more than pleasure-grounds or kitchen-gardens of the rudest kind, until the time of Queen Elizabeth. King James I. of Scotland describes the garden at Windsor Castle, where he was confined by Henry V., as a place set thick with trees, and alleys of hawthorn, with an arbour in each corner. Much later, in the year 1512, the great Earl of Northumberland, whose household consisted of 160 persons, "had but one gardener, who attended hourly in the garden for setting of erbis, and clipping of knottes, and sweeping the said garden clean." In the gardens of Nonesuch, the palace of Henry VIII., constructed about the year 1540, we hear of shady walks, columns and pyramids of marble "fountains that spout water one round the other like a pyramid, upon which are perched small birds that stream water out of their bills," and of similar objects; but nothing of the more essential part of a garden,—its plants. Pleasure-grounds of this description, indeed, have existed in England ever since the Conquest.*

* Pict. Hist. Eng.

Several ages, however, have been required to establish the true and correct principles of this art as adapted for the development of nature, not only in gardening but the general disposition of pleasure-grounds; during which the natural taste of the people and the influence of foreign taste have mutually contended with, and perhaps in turn corrected each other, until at length a sound system has been enunciated, based upon the true principles of art, and calculated to set forth the charms of nature in a manner the most efficient and perfect.

Gardening in England has had a double advantage over both painting and sculpture, in that in the first place ornamental grounds being the property of persons of affluence, the fullest amount of patronage has been afforded to the cultivation of the art; and in the next place, persons of the highest taste and most extensive cultivation have been induced to turn their attention to landscape gardening, and to the laying out and adornment of their grounds.

XI. Having traced as accurately as I can the origin and growth of each of the arts in this country, I come now to consider the present state in which we find them existent.

We may conclude on the whole that the condition in our day of each of these different branches of the arts, more especially painting, sculpture, architecture, and music, to which I have more particularly alluded, is precisely such as might be calculated upon as the result of that high condition of refinement and luxury to which we have attained. Among the ancients, painting was made the vehicle for expressing the noblest ideas of which the mind is capable, and for calling forth the loftiest emotions of the soul; and to this great end was manual dexterity ever made subservient, and regarded only as a means to its attainment. Among the moderns manual dexterity is the very end itself which is aimed at, and nothing higher than or beyond this appears to enter into the mind of many an artist; or if it does, the ideas are so poor that they are utterly lost sight of in the care and attention bestowed on the manual excellence aimed at in the performance.

Hence, the main and leading characteristic of the condition of art in our day, more especially as regards painting and sculp-

ture in this country, may be strictly said to be that of insipid correctness. Productions in these arts are in every respect faultless and free from defects. The drawing is most accurate, the colouring is sober and exempt from exaggeration, the perspective true, and due attention to rule is ever paid. This is the case, indeed, more or less, in a corresponding manner, with efforts in each of the arts. Hence mediocrity is the prevailing state of art at the present period. It attains correctness, but it never proceeds beyond that point. As an almost inevitable consequence of this condition of artistical poverty and deficiency in genius, it is that we not only are unable to conceive, and to represent in a manner worthy of them, heroic scenes and enterprises; but that when we do attempt them, we bring them down to the level of those common every-day transactions which alone are now successfully portrayed. Even in the case of those artists who have been to a certain, though only limited extent, successful in epic composition, it is not, as in the case of Raphael or Michael Angelo, the grand and leading ideas which the transaction is calculated to call forth, that the painting is qualified to excite; but by dextrous mechanical effort, the absence of all this is sought to be atoned for. A glare is created by which it is hoped that all the grosser deficiencies may be either forgotten or obscured. That which is really and so entirely wanting is a genius who can represent in a manner worthy of the subject, any of those great events which the pencil of Raphael and Michael Angelo so successfully and so sublimely portrayed. That which is actually and alone successfully accomplished, is a mode of representing commonplace scenes and persons in an effective and striking manner, so as for the time to surprise, and it must be admitted also considerably to gratify the beholder. Thus, simple nature as she is seen in her every-day aspect, more particularly as regards the production of accurate portraits, the agreeable portrayal of the forms and faces of our peasantry, and the aspect which the country presents in her ordinary landscapes, is depicted with great force and considerable truth; and very pleasing and pretty are the productions of this kind which grace the walls of our artistical institutions. In quiet landscape

especially, English artists peculiarly excel, particularly in representing these scenes in water-colours. While we fail entirely in epic composition, here at least we appear fitted to succeed.

Or to illustrate my meaning by reference to the theory which I have endeavoured to propound, I would contend that with respect to works of art in general, with a few striking exceptions, the principles of delineation are fully carried out and rigidly observed, and that so far as regards correctness and strict accordance with these principles, these efforts of each kind are perfect; while with respect to the principles of the picturesque, they are but little regarded, and have only a very limited influence in the composition of artistical performances, which are also deficient in all the qualities of a high intellectual order. Efforts in the nobler walk of art, in epic composition, are but seldom attempted, and when they are ventured upon, they serve only to demonstrate our present inability to soar in these exalted regions.

But it may be perhaps urged that correctness and mediocrity, to which a due observance of the principles of delineation is sufficient to bring us, are the ordinary condition of mankind, and of things in general; and that, indeed, with their attainment, the world in general is fully satisfied, and even deems itself fortunate to have secured them. To this, however, I reply that art is an exception to the ordinary vulgar rule as regards the relative degree of excellence at which efforts in it ought to arrive; inasmuch as its end is not only to represent nature, but to represent its characteristic features, and in the most perfect manner. Its aim, indeed, is to afford not a mere sample of, but a selection from objects in nature. Moreover, as we see in human nature that men of great virtues have often great vices also, and those of great vices great virtues, while men of merely correct life and habits are endowed with neither; so may it be observed with respect to works of art, that those which possess the greatest merit have also great defects, while those which are most faultless are insipid and barren.

As regards efforts in poetry and in eloquence, as well as in painting and sculpture, with some few brilliant exceptions, the same characteristics will be found to distinguish them. The

style is eminently faultless, but it is nothing more. There is but little grandeur or sublimity in any contemporary productions, and even the beauty is very limited. To supply the place of noble ideas, an ingenious effort is made to contrive new modes of versification. Invention is in fact resorted to to compensate for the absence of imagination. Mechanical skill is used, not to set off but to atone for the want of mental power. So also in eloquence, rhetorical dexterity and artifice are availed of to make up for the destitution of noble sentiment and grand ideas.

With regard also to our productions in music and in architecture, to what single grand original performance of a first-rate class, either as regards the public buildings that have been upraised, or the musical performances which have been composed, can we appeal as calculated to confer real lustre on the period in which they were brought forth?

Dramatic acting, like the other arts in England, does not appear to have made any great advances of late in the highest department of the art,—the epic or grand style,—while in the common and correct representation of vulgar or everyday life, and in effecting the humorous, extraordinary skill has been displayed. In some of the performances of Garrick, of John Kemble, and of Mrs. Siddons, during the age preceding the present, the noblest attainments of this art in its loftiest style, have however been reached. As these great personages have disappeared from the stage,—at any rate since the withdrawal of our illustrious tragedian Macready,—it has happened with their art, as with the other corresponding arts, that this too has declined into an insipid mediocrity. Here, as in painting and poetry, we excel only in the representation of domestic every-day life. The grand and the sublime, and even the tragic, appear to be quite beyond our sphere.

The present condition of costume in this country is also very similar to that of certain other arts. It possesses neither the grandeur nor the dignity of the martial habit of the ruder middle ages, nor the splendid magnificence and real beauty exhibited during some earlier periods in our history. Like efforts in painting, those in costume are too refined to be grand,

too highly finished to be sublime. Corresponding with attempts in pictorial art, they are also of excellent mechanical workmanship. Originality is lost in neatness. Genius is directed only to the promotion of tinsel and tawdry. All the qualities possessed by the art are those which characterize an age of a high degree of civilization, or rather luxury. As in painting sculpture and architecture, science has here lent its aid, and has contributed much to the manual dexterity of the artist.

In one art indeed, that of gardening, England does at length appear to have not only reached a high degree of perfection, but to excel all other countries, not merely in Europe but throughout the world, as regards the tasteful manner in which her ornamental grounds are disposed and laid out, including not gardens alone, but parks and pleasure-grounds of every description, where art and nature seem harmoniously and simultaneously to combine in aiding and correcting and giving effect to each other. Great, moreover, has been the advancement during late years of this enchanting art, the true principles of which consist not in perverting, or even altering the course of nature, but in directing her to the full development of her charms with the utmost effect. These principles are now beginning to be fully understood; and as this is the case, we may hope to see them yet more perfectly carried out, and more extensively applied.

But although real beauty in full perfection has here been attained, yet in grandeur of scenery,—the epic style in gardening,—in producing the effect of gigantic rocks and precipices corresponding with the sublime in the other arts, this art must, like them, notwithstanding even the bold and successful efforts alluded to in the last chapter,* be said to have failed in England; if, indeed, any attainment of this character has ever been fully effected in gardening. This, however, is necessarily owing to the natural disposition and formation of the landscape of the country, which as in Switzerland does not admit of these grand attempts; and partly to the limited space of land allotted to mere ornamental grounds.

Gardening, nevertheless, like the other arts is fully capable

* *Vide ante*, Chapter XII. Sect. 12.

of representing nature, and in all her scenes and features alike; in her sublime and terrible, as well as in her soft and smiling aspects. And it only requires for the principles of art to be fully applied here, in order to render its success in this its highest department, as complete as it has been in its humbler walks, where the imitation of nature has been so fully attained. Indeed, the examples cited * prove the entire capability of this art for the noblest efforts at which it can aim.

XII. We have now, after tracing the origin and progress of the arts in this country, and examining their present condition, to inquire into the leading causes which have retarded, and do still retard our advancement here, and prevent us from rivalling those great nations who have preceded us in the same pursuits.

Although the moderns are in general decidedly and essentially inferior to the ancients in the production of works of art; yet, as I observed before, they are in many respects superior to them in taste,† and in the correctness of the principles which regulate it, which has probably progressed and matured itself correspondingly and contemporaneously with the advancement of civilization, and with the growth of society and of the world. It appears, therefore, very extraordinary that this acknowledged inferiority in the production of works which are the efforts of taste mainly, should exist. But exist it undoubtedly does, and it is, moreover, extensive and well established. It is important therefore here to inquire, as far as we can, into the leading causes which have contributed to occasion this deficiency.

Among the various reasons assigned for our inferiority to the ancients in the production of works of art, the following three have been alleged as the principal:—1. That our climate does not favour our out-of-door life. 2. That it is unsuitable for the development of national genius. 3. That art and religion are not intimately blended together in this country.

(1.) As regards the first of the causes, it may be remarked that although the naked form has afforded the model for many beautiful works of art, yet they are not all of this description;

* *Vide ante*, Chapter XII. Sect. 12.

† *Vide ante*, Vol. I. Chapter IV. Sect. 8.

and the noblest of Raphael's are not only not naked, but represent in-door life, such as the cartoon of 'Paul Preaching.' Moreover, in the days of Raphael Michael Angelo and Rembrandt, this objection would have prevailed as strongly as in our day. Even in the lowest walk of the arts of painting and sculpture, the representation of elegant flowing draperies, we are unable to equal, or indeed to approach the ancients. With all our superiority in mechanical skill beyond what they possessed, we seem to lack the genius to direct that skill, in the design of common and ordinary forms which in grace and beauty might rival theirs, and of which even nature furnishes abundant types.

The unpicturesque nature of modern drapery has, indeed, been considered very deleterious as regards its influence on modern art. But models of flowing drapery are easily formed, and it requires only the capacity to adapt them to our designs. Allowing, however, the utmost for the influence of such a cause, it can have but a very limited operation. Expression and feeling, in which we most fail, cannot at all suffer from this circumstance. Again, it is said that we have no models in nature. But surely the human countenance, which is as barely exposed now as it was in the rudest ages, affords us models from nature of the most valuable kind in the development of character and emotion.

(2.) If climate influences materially the taste of a people, and the style of art that prevails in a particular nation, its taste will doubtless remain the same so long as the climate continues unchanged; and the style of art ought moreover to accord with the character of the climate. On the contrary, however, we find that in the same climate taste is ever in a state of fluctuation, and that every variety of style is exhibited there. Climate can therefore only collaterally influence either taste or style.

If our climate is uncongenial to men of genius in painting and sculpture, why should it be congenial to poets and orators? Surely the same height or variation in the thermometer which injuriously affects the temperament of the one, must prejudice also that of the other.

In colour, which is said to be in many ways prejudiced by the

English climate, we are allowed in certain respects peculiarly to excel.

(3.) As regards the third of the causes assigned for the inferiority of art at the present day, in the circumstance that art and religion are not in our age intimately blended together, there appears to be no reason why religion and art should not be as friendly to one another, as intimately united, and as conducive to each other's welfare in our own time, as in that of the Greeks. And the subjects afforded by Christianity are as noble, and in every way as well adapted for artistical representation, as were those of paganism.

No less an authority than the great painter Barry,* has endeavoured to prove that the introduction of superior art into England was prevented by the change of our religion from Popery to Protestantism. But if this was the case, how is it that anterior to the Reformation we had no distinguished painters in this country, and that the arts have made the greatest progress since that period? In Roman Catholic countries, moreover, the decline of art has been as extensive as in our own, and in none more than in Italy; while on the other hand, Rembrandt flourished in protestant Holland.

Art in the present age, in this country more especially, has, no doubt, been largely influenced by that which influences the general tone of thought, and reasoning, and feeling, in each department of philosophy, and poetry, and literature,—the strong and decided material bias of the age, a bias which induces us to regard with indifference whatever is intellectual and imaginative and unseen, and to value only what is real and apparent, and gross and visible. Hence, in painting, character and emotion and expression are almost entirely neglected; and the production of mechanical effects with respect to light and shade and tints, and the exhibition of dexterity in representing material forms, only are considered. As in philosophy, and in common life as well, we forget altogether the soul, and think merely of the body; so we disregard and neglect the noble ends to which art can serve, and care only

* 'Inquiry into Real and Imaginary Obstructions to the Progress of Art in England.'

about the means of attaining that end, as though they were actually of more importance than the very end itself.

Indeed, if the principles advocated in certain quarters be correct, it must follow that not only those pictures, but those parts of pictures that are the least intellectual, which admit nevertheless most extensively of the achievement and display of mechanical effect, are chiefly entitled to our attention and admiration. Thus, in the cartoons of Raphael, we are quite in error in admiring the almost divine expression of the countenances, and the noble delineation of character and emotion both in the features and in the attitudes of the persons represented; but what we should mainly observe and venerate are the graceful folds of the drapery, the texture of the robes with which these august personages are adorned, and the skill and minuteness with which the hair of their heads is depicted on the canvas!

It has been said that beauty was a principle of the religion of the Greeks. But surely grandeur and sublimity and imagination of the loftiest kind, are equally a principle of Christianity, and are also equally favourable to art of the highest order. Indeed, one very important and essential advantage which modern and Christian art obtains over that which was ancient and pagan, is the incomparably far nobler and more sublime notions entertained of the Deity, and of all His attributes, in our day, than in the ages gone by. And as in the grandest epic compositions, whether in poetry or painting, the Deity is introduced or referred to as the leading and governing spirit, or influence, by which the whole performance is directed; it will necessarily follow that the more magnificent are the endowments with which this being is gifted, the more exalted must be the character of the entire piece, which borrows from this, as from a sun in the centre of its system, all its dignity and its glory. And although in representations of the present day a God does not openly and visibly appear to take part in and to regulate every transaction, as in the sublime descriptions of Homer and Virgil; yet the consciousness that He on all occasions is everywhere present, and does direct them throughout their movements, unseen though He is by

mortal eye, even the more raises our ideas as to the infinity of His omnipotence and omniscience, and adds essentially and largely to the sublimity of the scene.

Barry also says, in the work already quoted, that it is a misfortune never entirely to be retrieved, that painting was not suffered to grow up amongst us at the same time with poetry and the other arts and sciences, while the genius of the nation was yet forming its character in strength beauty and refinement. In this regret every lover of art must join. At the same time, the assertion accounts for nothing as regards our actual deficiency in this respect.

The unmusical inharmonious character of the English tongue, has been often referred to as a reason why we should produce no grand works in poetry or eloquence; and yet how fully has the genius of our great poets and orators overcome these supposed insurmountable obstacles. Surely that of our painters and sculptors ought to exert itself with corresponding force.

Some have attributed the want of expression in the pictorial compositions of the English school to the phlegmatic character of the English, who are seldom roused to exhibit those strong passions which the painter might copy. But although the lower feelings are less displayed than in a barbarous age, yet the higher endowments of the mind, and the expression of intellectual character, which it is most important for a painter to depict, are more fully developed than ever; and it is, indeed, much to be feared that there is no very lamentable lack of brute passion also!

Human nature is the same in the nineteenth as it was in the ninth century; and man has feelings and tastes and passions in England identical with those which actuated him in Greece and Rome. Although a particular quality in any one race may be more favourable to the production, or to promote the due estimation of art than that possessed by another; yet it should be borne in mind that many of these different qualities counteract or counterbalance one another, and that deficiencies in one respect are often more than compensated for by superior endowments in another.

It has also been said that an age which gives occasion to but

few great events, calls forth but few great works of art, which are representative or commemorative of those events. And it will perhaps be contended by some that heroic painting and heroic poetry, indeed, heroic artistical productions of any kind, can be produced only in an heroic age, when the achievements in question are actually in progress; that the same noble and energetic spirit which actuated their performance, should inspire also their narrators; that for a people to produce works of a sublime and epic character, the times in which they live, and the scenes which they witness, should be of this character. This was indeed peculiarly the case with the classic ages of history, the days of Homer and Demosthenes, and Virgil and Phidias, from which our own age doubtless varies much.

Nevertheless, the age and the nation in which such enterprises are read and thought of and held up to admiration, must on many accounts be as favourable for their representation as those in which they actually took place; more especially as the achievers of the mighty deeds described were not the persons who celebrated them by artistical performances. Besides which, deeds of heroism are not the only topics that rouse the efforts of the epic muse. Sacred and other scenes, the knowledge and the veneration of which are common to all ages alike, equally with those which are heroic, serve as the subject of the noblest productions in each branch of art. Moreover, deeds of heroism in war are effected in our day as well as in the ancient times. In addition to this several of the transactions of a civilized class which we witness, are in many respects as suitable for artistic representation of each kind, and as provocative of artistic and picturesque emotions, as were those more thrilling and exciting scenes of woe and bloodshed enacted during the earlier and ruder ages of society. Indeed, many as may be our disadvantages, we have much to compensate for them; and surely, the events of the past are enough to serve for artistic efforts of each kind. In the next place the great triumphs of skill and of mind which distinguish the present age, are doubtless as worthy of representation as are the feats and the conquests of mere animal force and brute power.

It has been further urged that we of this country are too

warlike to foster art. But after an uninterrupted peace of thirty years, surely this argument must also fail.

The strong commercial spirit of this nation has also been asserted to be inimical to art. But commerce, like science, in many respects aids rather than retards art, as art ought to refine not to check commerce.

Some have contended that our form of government is inimical to art. But being of that mixed character which unites the advantages of both monarchy and republicanism, especially as regards the patronage of art, it surely ought not to be thus considered. Poetry and eloquence, which are equally liable with painting and sculpture thus to suffer, have not experienced any discouragements on this account.

Mr. Hume, in his essay on the 'Rise of the Arts,' seems to intimate an opinion that nations, like soils, become in time exhausted, and that the arts consequently require fresh soils to nurture them. Surely, however, in the case of this country the soil can hardly be said to be exhausted, so little having been as yet actually grown upon it; although it may require fresh tilling or fresh manuring or draining to render it more nutritious, or that certain noxious weeds should be removed.

The leading and essential cause of the decline of the arts of each kind in a nation which has attained a high degree of civilization, is that extreme attention to minute and meretricious ornament and mechanical execution already alluded to, to the neglect of the nobler, and the grand intellectual efforts of which the art is capable. This is observable alike in poetry eloquence and music, as well as in painting and sculpture and architecture; and that dire intellectual disease which we call luxury, is in each case the canker worm that lies at the root, and produces all the mischief. Hence it comes that effect is preferred to grandeur, prettiness to boldness, delicacy to vigour, and high finish and mechanical dexterity to expression and character and general intellectual excellence.

To such an extent, indeed, have attention to and admiration of mere manual dexterity been allowed to have the preference over, and to usurp the place of intellectual merit and feeling and imagination, that certain modern critics have actually

treated the latter as something quite beyond the province of art, and as though mechanical skill was the very end and only legitimate ultimate aim of art itself, instead of being merely a means to that end, which consists in calling forth ideas of grandeur and beauty and of an imaginative character. As well might we consider smooth and correct versification to be the only end of poetry, as mere manual dexterity the real end of painting. Nevertheless, so far, in these days of degenerating criticism, has the argument for confining art to the humblest walk, for limiting it to this narrow and contracted sphere, and for excluding from its province all that is grand and noble and sublime and imaginative been carried, that one art critic,* —one, too, who is entitled to speak with official authority on the subject,—goes to the length of condemning, and that in no measured terms, modern sculpture, particularly the sublime productions of Flaxman and Canova and Thorwaldsen, on the sole and express ground that they have not abandoned the pursuit of the classic, and have not given up the representation of scenes of poetic imagination and historical interest, especially those which the poets of old so vividly described; and have not been content to aim at the representation only of ordinary every-day scenes and common objects in nature.

The warbling of a brook, the chirp of a bird, the tints of a ray, and the budding of a daisy, are, no doubt, of themselves subjects which are directly calculated to produce very lovely ideas in the mind; but can we compare them in point of intellectuality or pathos or sublimity with the descriptions of the workings of the soul, the rage of tempestuous passions, the various joys and sorrows, the hopes and the agonies that excite and distract mankind, the operations of which have been so powerfully portrayed, and so graphically described by the pencil of Raphael and Michael Angelo, and the pen of Milton and of Shakspeare, of Chaucer, of Spenser, and of Pope? And yet we are now deliberately and distinctly taught that the former are more worthy of our attention than are the latter!

* Essays of F. T. P. in the Fine Art Department of the Official Catalogue of the International Exhibition, 1862.

It is also contended by some that the present and not the past is "the true region of all historical art."

Scenes long passed away have, however, undoubtedly a far higher poetical interest, and appeal much more powerfully to the imagination, and to all the nobler faculties and efforts of the mind, than do those which are familiar and near. It is difficult if not impossible to invest present transactions with any very sublime interest, or to confer upon them the air of dignity and grandeur which may be infused into the description of persons and scenes that are distant. Indeed, this very distance and difference from our own age with reference to the events represented, bestow on them a grandeur and a dignity somewhat analogous to what distance does on mountain or landscape scenery, but which it is impossible to give to, or to infuse into representations with which we are every day familiar, or which come near to our own time.

One cause for our deficiency in works of art of great excellence in this country, has been assigned to be the number of productions of this character from other countries, and of ages gone by, by which our artists have become dazzled; and it has been asserted* that this was the real reason why the ancient Romans never succeeded in establishing a school of art. To a certain extent, however, it must be acknowledged that the possession of these noble examples of what art is capable, must be of great use to our artists, at any rate up to a certain point. That the existence of such works would have the effect of discouraging men of real genius, is not much to be apprehended; but it may be inferred that they would endeavour to excel, instead of merely imitating their models;—as was, indeed, the case with Raphael and Michael Angelo, Flaxman and Wren, Milton and Shakspeare, in their respective arts.

But it might be asked by some, why, if owing to the change of circumstances and in the wants of the age, certain of the arts, or certain styles in them, are superseded, new forms of them do not arise out of these various exigencies, more especially as science greatly aids their practical development? As regards the origin and invention of the arts, the state of

* Barry's Letters, Works, p. 71.

early society was considerably more favourable for such efforts than is a highly civilized condition, as men saw far more of nature than they now do. And again, in using natural materials, as in constructing buildings out of trees or caves, they were led to imitate natural objects. In our day, each material is so altered by arbitrary appliances, that nothing of its original natural beauty remains.

As regards the invention of new styles, the scientific manner of using materials allows but little scope for suggestions to arise, as during the early period of the arts. In the primitive stages of architecture, imitations were effected of trees and foliage; in later periods, the mode of dovetailing the wood formed the type. This, indeed, affords a fair illustration of the operation of the system.

Many new styles, indeed, have arisen; but no styles possessing beauty. Form, as to the whole, has perhaps as much deteriorated, as ornament as to details has become profuse. We have produced no new styles in grand architecture of late years; but in domestic architecture, such as designs of lamps earthenware vessels and household furniture, our taste for the ornamental is daily developed. Art is by this means domesticated, and familiarized to all. Although this is in many respects to be commended, yet the approval must nevertheless be accompanied with the fear that art may thus become vulgar, and will lose its influence. Idols erected for adoration, degenerate by common usage into toys.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE PROSPECTS FOR BRITISH ART.

I. INQUIRIES relating to the character and genius of any particular nation, whether as exhibited by its prowess in arms, or its progress in the arts of civilization,—in which, doubtless, deeds of renown, and triumphs as noble, may be achieved as in the former,—seldom fail to be both interesting and instructive to every intelligent person. But of all the various topics towards which this investigation may be directed, that which concerns the character and turn of the national mind in regard to those arts, the nature of which we have been considering in the present work, is doubtless one of the most attractive, and deserving of the fullest consideration. In two of the preceding chapters I endeavoured to point out the capacity of art for the representation of human nature,* and to demonstrate the efforts of which it is capable in the sublime and lofty realms of imaginative creation.† The peculiar genius of each particular people necessarily and uniformly exercises important influence alike on the extent and on the direction of these efforts of both kinds, as also on the mode in which they are developed; and on that genius, those arts and those efforts reciprocally act in turn in a corresponding manner. In the case of each art, moreover, there is a characteristic feature discernible as regards the style and manner of its fructification in each particular country. And this characteristic feature is in every instance mainly affected by the peculiar cast and turn of the national mind.

* Chapter XI. † Chapter XII.

As far as genius for art in any country extends, it may be fairly calculated that corresponding efforts in art will be attained; while, on the other hand, the extent of that genius must necessarily fix the limit which art will reach. The circumstances and character of the times will, in turn, materially influence the exercise, but can never actually affect the existence and the reality of the national genius.

In a former chapter,* reference was made to the particular influence upon art of special national characteristics in different countries. We have now to consider the mode in which these characteristics have affected the productions of art in our own country.

Although the arts of painting and sculpture have been for some centuries extensively cultivated among us, and considerable manual dexterity has been achieved in the production of works of art; yet, it must be at the same time acknowledged that we have not as yet rivalled the most celebrated of the ancient schools, either of Greece or of later times, the Roman, the Florentine, the Flemish, or even the Dutch. Hitherto, no painter in the highest walk in art, one who has been capable of adequately representing any of those stupendous transactions which formed the subjects of the principal productions of Raphael's pencil, and which Michael Angelo depicted with such power and effect, and of describing them as they described them, has arisen in the English school. Nor in sculpture, although some of our artists in this branch have been endowed with very lofty genius, has any very great work of this character as yet been produced in this country.

In the epic or grand style, the lofty genius of Milton has conferred upon the English school of poetry the most exalted rank; and the noblest performances both in imagination and picturesque design have been achieved by his pen. Shakspeare has not only rivalled, but far excelled the utmost efforts of genius which in dramatic poetry had been attempted in ancient or modern times.

Nor in certain other branches of art have we been less successful. In eloquence some efforts of the very highest cha-

* *Vide ante*, Vol. I. Chapter IV. Sect. 2; also Chapter XIII. Sect. 12.

racter, fairly rivalling the choicest and most renowned productions of the great orators and writers of antiquity, have been produced in this country.

This renders it the more astonishing, and indeed unaccountable, that in painting and sculpture we should be thus deficient, more especially as it is not in mechanical skill that our performances in these arts fail, but in the intellectual excellence and superiority which so distinguish our efforts in the other sister arts. If, however, we compare any modern attempt at epic composition with one of the great works of the old masters, we shall at once see the inferiority of the former, in intellectual power, to the latter, according to the different rules and principles which have been here laid down. Indeed, the majority of those efforts in the epic style which we see occasionally attempted, are mainly distinguished by, principally attract attention from, and owe their chief merit to their possession of qualities and endowments which pertain rather to domestic and every-day scenes, than to productions in the grand style. In high polish and dexterity of execution we may rival, or even surpass many of the works of the ancient masters; but we fall far below them in the noble and high intellectual characteristics of original conception, and the expression and delineation of character and feeling.

It should, indeed, ever be borne in mind that the real value of each art depends not on the manual dexterity of the artist, but on the mental power which his work exhibits. The painter of mere professional skill appeals to the eye only. The artist of genius appeals to the eye also, but to the intellect as well through the medium of the eye. The real defect of our artists is that they have too much practice and not enough principle. They devote themselves to mechanical excellence in the art, but they neglect that mental culture which is essential to infuse mind into the performances which the hand produces. Extensive practice is no doubt necessary to perfection in painting; but it may nevertheless be reasonably questioned whether after a certain period, and ample manual facility has been acquired, any additional skill is obtained by the mere exercise of the hand, provided there is sufficient practice followed to keep the

hand in use. Indeed, when they have attained proficiency in painting, artists do not appear to make any actual progress in this respect, and sometimes their earlier performances are the most perfect even in manual skill. When the body has attained maturity, no amount of exercise can make it continue its growth. Occasionally, indeed, a new style may be adopted; though not unfrequently, as in the case of Turner, the productions in the old style are superior to those in the new. In the performances of Michael Angelo, Leonardo da Vinci, and Rubens, who followed other pursuits besides painting, we do not perceive any deficiency in execution owing to the want of daily practice in the art.

Even the French school is far superior to our own in many of the most important features of art, although far inferior to the ancients. Indeed, as regards several of the productions of the French school of painting, while they may possess greater defects than are exhibited in ours, it is by no means certain that they have not greater merits, and those of the highest and most valuable kind; particularly in the development of expression, and the power to exhibit feeling and passion. They are, moreover, in most cases classical in design, although occasionally rather effective than expressive, and too often more theatrical than passionate. In vigour they are seldom deficient; and frequently a considerable amount of character and emotion is displayed in their compositions. From that deadness and insipidity which are so frequent and fatal a failing in the productions of other countries, more especially our own, the French school is at any rate entirely free.

The manner in which science has eclipsed art in its progress, is evinced not merely by the comparative advancement of efforts in art and science in general, but by the mode in which the arts themselves have been followed. In modern times scientific merit appears to be usurping the place of artistic excellence, even in productions of an artistic nature. Our orations are as superior to those of the ancients in logical argument, as they are inferior to them in genuine eloquence.

The incapacity of our artists to produce great works of real intellectual merit, was some time ago fairly tested by the ex-

hibition of the cartoons in Westminster Hall, liberal prizes having been offered by the Government for the best designs in historical and imaginative composition. The general defect of the English school was peculiarly visible in these performances as regards the want of expression and character and feeling which they displayed, while in each the drawing and grouping were scrupulously correct. General insipidity, and want of individual appropriate character in the persons represented, while the composition was in entire accordance with all the formal rules of art, were the leading and marked features of these productions.

Tasks, however, seldom call forth any great efforts of original genius, which does not stand in need of such stimulants to exertion. It may be inferred, indeed, that precisely such a result would be produced by offering prizes for historical designs, as would have occurred if similar prizes in poetry had been offered with a view of ascertaining the degree of talent of this kind in the nation. Abundance of rhyming compositions would have been sent in which would have astonished all those who did not understand such matters, remarkable for high finish and correctness of composition; but which, like the cartoons in Westminster Hall, would be utterly wanting in original conception, real feeling, expression, and suitableness of character. Any one with proper practice may draw a correct figure or compose smooth rhymes; but these acquirements will no more enable him to rival Raphael or Shakspeare, than possessing a good pen will confer the gift of writing with eloquence. Efforts of this kind will be successful so far as regards the strict observance of the principles of delineation; but in all the higher qualities which a work of this character should possess as regards the principles of the picturesque, they will be found to be entirely deficient.

II. Among the various causes which have contributed to the deficieney in works of high artistical merit in this country, one of the first and most influential must be considered to be the want of adequate patronage of painting and sculpture, that is said to have been peculiarly experienced in England, while that branch only of these arts which consists in the production of

portraits and of busts and statues of real persons has been encouraged; not, indeed, from any love of art, but because it has ministered to our social and domestic feelings, or has contributed to gratify family or personal vanity. The existence of this deficiency or limitation of patronage cannot be denied, and has been peculiarly characteristic of this country, as I have already observed in the preceding chapter when speaking of the present condition of the arts in England. This, in its turn, must be owing to various causes. As regards painting, the number of works of the old masters, and the still greater number of supposed works, of themselves supply the artistical market, and at any rate take precedence of those of our own age, especially as regards the productions of living artists whose fame has not yet been established. The vast multitude of purchasers of works of art, who consist, not of those of most genius and discernment, but of those of most wealth, are so from fashion more than from taste; and are, therefore, induced to prefer having their mansions decorated with paintings by those whose names sound high as artists of celebrity.

The mercantile spirit of the nation seems, indeed, to pervade all ranks and classes, and to bias their conduct in matters apparently the most remote from its influence. Thus, the purchase and possession of works of art is looked upon as a mere pecuniary adventure. They are selected mainly as an investment, a sort of refined and ornamental mode of laying out superfluous capital; consequently, it is not so much works of merit as works of value that are sought out. The productions of living artists, however excellent they may be, are disregarded, because they have not as yet reached their ultimate sterling market value, and are liable to depreciation by the production of better works from the same artist. On the other hand, the works of the old masters have always attached to them a specific amount of value, and are never liable to deteriorate from the same cause which may affect the former. Their worth, in fact, depends in most cases, not on their intrinsic merit but on the proofs of their genuineness.

The deficiency of compositions at the present day as regards striking intellectual merit, by which the world at large must

judge of works of art, is another cause of the want of patronage of painting. Indeed, where performances have been produced, which from their sterling excellence have attracted general admiration among those capacitated to estimate such qualities,—although they may not have been of the highest rank in this respect,—they have not failed, even in these days, to meet with liberal patronage. As a composition of this nature is intended to excite the admiration of all, it should doubtless be so capacitated, and ought not to require every person who views it to understand the mechanical subtleties of art, in order to discover its value; any more than to perceive the beauties of a poem an oration or an oratorio, it is necessary for him who admires it that he should be skilled in the art of versification, of eloquence, or of music.

But the most extensive and direct cause of the want of patronage of works of art in England, is the poverty of the nation, occasioned by our immense national debt, and the many taxes to which we are in consequence subjected. For, although we are accounted the richest nation in Europe, yet, as is often the case with those who have large incomes, our customary and, indeed, almost necessary expenses are equally great in proportion, leaving but little for luxuries, of which the patronage of painting, and the possession of choice works of art is accounted one of the most dispensable, delightful as it may be deemed. Such, indeed, has been our national penury in regard to matters of art, that the most lavish expenditure which has ever been conceived for the promotion of the arts in England, falls far below what was actually freely voted for the same noble purposes in Athens. The fact of this want of patronage being established, it does not require much skill to point out in what way it operates to retard the progress of the higher branches of the arts among us. Hence it is that men of genius and of really great power, are drawn off from the pursuit of art to others which are more profitable, and more certain of rendering a return for their skill and labour. Not improbably also the extensive advancement of the sciences to which I have before referred, and the patronage which has been bestowed on poetry and eloquence and music, have had considerable influence indi-

rectly in retarding painting and sculpture, as men of high acquirements and extensive talent have been induced to adopt those professions where ample rewards are offered to their followers; while painting and sculpture, from want of a fair amount of remuneration to their professors, have been left to men of inferior minds who were allured to them mainly from the prospect of no formidable rivalry appearing there. Hence also it is that we have had so many who have been eminent as poets and for their eloquence, who might, had they devoted themselves to epic compositions in painting, have rivalled the great masters of old, and produced the most sublime and grand works. Shakspeare and Milton, and Burke and Macaulay, might each of them, no doubt, have attained high eminence had they devoted themselves to epic composition in painting or sculpture. The mechanical part of the arts is always to be acquired; it is in mind chiefly that the efforts of our modern artists in historical composition have been deficient.

Indeed, we may be the more convinced that there is in this country the capacity to produce works of high intellectual vigour, such as characterized the schools of ages gone by, from the occasional productions of this class which are frequently to be met with in engravings and etchings and woodcuts, combined with the manual dexterity and skill exhibited by some of our artists in their finished paintings. All that is actually required is such an amount of patronage as will induce persons gifted with the double capacity of designing and executing really great paintings, to devote their full energies and time to this noble undertaking. As it is, men of genius who can design meritorious works, find no encouragement to complete them; and those who could produce perfect productions of this class, are induced to execute only performances of a trivial character.

So powerful, nevertheless, has been the effect of this want of patronage, or the belief of its existence, that even artists by profession who have been gifted with powers for excelling in the loftier department, have almost confined themselves to portrait painting, as in the case of Sir Joshua Reynolds and Sir Thomas Lawrence, and also of Holbein and Vandyke, whose minds were imbued with the highest principles of the art, and executed their performances with a great degree

of manual skill rivalling that of the ancients. Both Holbein and Vandyke, however, although they had previously practised historical composition, when they came to England degenerated into mere portrait painters.

Sculpture, like painting, has been patronized only so far as it served to gratify family vanity or affection. Perhaps, while the latter art owes most to the living, the former has been best befriended by the dead.

Music poetry and eloquence have fared better. The first has been more liberally patronized, because it has contributed to afford amusement and recreation to the greatest number. But, notwithstanding this fact, except in a very few instances, the professional income derived from this art has been but inconsiderable; and, indeed, the composition of new original great works here is very rare. Poetry has been more independent of patronage, because it is an art which may be followed with other pursuits, and does not require the person engaging in it to devote himself to it as a sole occupation, as in the case of a painter. Eloquence, although not of the highest order, has fared the best of all, because it has been largely patronized, it being the surest aid to preferment in the senate, the pulpit, and at the bar.

Architecture must be entirely dependent on the patronage which is extended to those who adopt it as a profession, as without patronage even practice is not afforded to the followers of this art, as in the case of those of painting sculpture and poetry; inasmuch as the works on which it is employed are of such magnitude that no private individual can undertake them. No architect could, of himself, venture to build cathedrals and churches and public edifices for the mere purpose of proving his skill, as a painter or sculptor or poet occupies himself in his pursuit. On the other hand, the architect has one great advantage in this respect over the followers of other branches of art, in that he has the opportunity of evincing his taste and genius by the production, at a very trifling cost, of designs for architectural edifices, in which may be exhibited all the mental power and originality which the building itself could display.

In the erection of prisons, barracks, courts of justice, and

other large public edifices on which great cost has been bestowed, it would surely have been more creditable to our taste had due regard been paid to architectural propriety, so as to render them ornaments instead of huge disfigurements to the neighbourhood in which they stand. Had this been attended to, ample patronage would have been afforded to architecture. In the structure of commercial buildings, beauty and ornament ought ever to be combined with use: they should not be allowed to stand as mere monuments of avarice, not only with respect to their object, but the style of their construction. So also in the formation of warehouses and railroad-buildings, taste as well as utility should ever be regarded.

As war and commerce are in their nature, in many ways, inimical to the ultimate progress and highest perfection of art and civilization; so in a corresponding manner, the modern edifices erected for the carrying on of these undertakings, appear in their style and general form to be utterly at variance with all the rules and principles of art. How greatly, indeed, do works of science in the foregoing respect ordinarily contrast with those of nature, where the streams which water the land, and waft its traffic inland from one town to another, instead of defacing, adorn and beautify the country through which they flow.

Deficiency in the patronage of dramatic acting is doubtless one great cause why it has not taken a higher position in this country; as unless it offers an adequate reward to those who follow it as a profession, men of the highest talent cannot be expected to devote themselves to this pursuit. There are, indeed, many individuals in other professions, as the bar and the Church as also in the senate, who appear admirably adapted for the histrionic art, had they applied themselves to it, instead of following a calling which affords a more certain, and a more ample remuneration.

The want of patronage of the drama at the present day, analogous to that in the case of epic painting, must, on the other hand, to a large extent, be attributed to the want of really great and intellectual men of genius in this art, who can appeal to the feelings, and above all to the mind of their audi-

ence; and who can raise instead of diminishing their conceptions of the scenes represented in the tragedies which are performed. When such have appeared on the stage,—as in the case of Garrick and Kemble and Macready,—the patronage of them, if not adequate to their merits, has been sufficient to show how fully they were appreciated.

Costume receives, perhaps, about a proportional measure of patronage with the higher arts. While common and ordinary productions secure a large share of encouragement, and meet with a constant and ready sale; really grand efforts obtain but small support, and inventive genius here is consequently at a low ebb. This art, too, like that of painting, suffers much from the preference given to foreign designs.

Gardening is so far independent of patronage, that its pursuit depends on its being followed by those who are the possessors of the ground to be laid out according to its principles, and who are generally among the highly educated and the affluent.

It may often happen, however, that the patronage bestowed on any art is not of a genuine legitimate kind as regards the art itself, which is after all not duly estimated or appreciated; but the occupation only, or sustaining medium out of which the art sprang, is that which is really supported. Thus, among avowed connoisseurs, pictures are ordered or bought, not as works of art, but as the means of preserving the likeness of a friend, or as ornamental pieces of furniture. Sculpture is patronized not as an art, but as a means of establishing a monumental memento. At the bar it is not so much real eloquence, as skill in rhetoric which meets with patronage. And it is not taste in architecture or costume, but utility or display in a building or a dress which the multitude desire and encourage. The amount of legitimate genuine patronage of art in this, or perhaps any other country, is therefore, probably, very limited indeed.

The fact of art requiring patronage might be urged perhaps by some as a proof of its degeneracy, as it may be said that skill in efforts of genius ought, like virtue, to be its own reward. On the other hand, it should be borne in mind that

painters, like other mortals, require to eat as well as to paint. They may indeed paint without patronage, but without patronage they cannot live. Genius undoubtedly may exist as much without encouragement as with it; but without it it will not be cultivated or flourish. It may, therefore, be deemed an indisputable axiom, that although patronage cannot produce meritorious works of art, the want of it must prevent their being produced. It is surely also chilling to art that while every other profession and pursuit brings to the followers of it comfort and competence, the artist starves; and not impossibly the higher is his genius, the lighter will be his purse,—as fewer will appreciate his merits. It not unfrequently indeed happens that when they are discovered, death has placed him beyond the reach of reward.

Patronage is, moreover, advantageous to art so far as it creates rivalry by raising up a number of competitors for the prizes offered, who stimulate each other. On the other hand, it is disadvantageous, as it encourages those who have no genius for art, to follow it for the sake not of itself, but of its prizes. It may also induce persons to follow not those pursuits for which they have most genius, but those which will bring them the most gain.

National patronage, of whatever art, is less likely to be fickle and erroneous than private patronage. That of individuals may be ignorant, and injudicious, and ill-directed, and thus injure instead of aiding art. To this all the arts alike are equally liable. State patronage, although not exempt from this failing, is less subject to it than is private patronage.

Northcote, indeed, goes so far as to assert* that art has never prospered unless it has been patronized either by the Church or by the State. We may, however, question the fact as to whether in any case it has been literally patronized by either. On the other hand, in certain instances where this sort of patronage has been liberally extended, the success of art has been but very limited. Statesmen and priests have, indeed, individually patronized art; but not so the institutions of which they were the representatives. Sovereigns and Popes have

* 'Life of Titian,' vol. i. pp. 395, 396.

themselves encouraged artists; but not so the Italian government, or the Papal Church. Raphael and Michael Angelo owed much to Leo X., but nothing to St. Peter's. Rembrandt was under obligations to neither Church nor State for their patronage of him; and yet he produced works in great abundance, and of extraordinary merit. In our day, portraits are painted both of Sovereigns and Prelates; and yet this does not make either the State or the Church patrons of art. Indeed, the only arts, if any, which can be strictly asserted to have been patronized both by the Government and the Church in this country, are those of sculpture and architecture. But the first of these is in a condition very little, if at all, more flourishing than is painting. The other is mainly followed in the efforts to copy, or at most to resuscitate the inventions of past ages.

III. In the preceding sections I observed that the main deficiency in the works of painting and sculpture in the English school, consists in the want of mental power and vigour in describing the scenes they portray, and rendering them attractive as intellectual performances which could afford gratification to persons of genius and cultivation, independent of the manual dexterity and skill which they evinced. Now it cannot be denied that this deficiency in intellectual merit of the original productions of the English school, which largely exists, arises mainly from the defective education which is usually afforded to our artists, with whom the imparting mechanical skill in their profession, and a general knowledge of the theoretical principles of beauty and grace, are deemed all-sufficient; while the refinement and elevation of the mind, and storing it with ideas of grandeur and beauty, appear to be regarded as superfluous and wholly unnecessary, and quite beyond the sphere of their attainments; and thus they never in fact advance beyond the first rudiments or grammar of their art. Hence also it is that their imagination is contracted; and in their general notions of the picturesque, instead of elevating and improving they fall below the generality of those around them of ordinary education.

The study of the works of the great writers of antiquity, so

as to obtain a true perception of the mode in which they described the various characters and scenes that they depicted with such dignity and force, and by which their minds would become stored with ideas of grandeur and beauty, ought to be an essential part of the education of every artist who aims at original conception.

The exploring too and pondering over the wonders of nature, —the glorious masterpieces which she herself has produced,— in the sublime and enchanting scenery of the Alps and of Italy, would be of infinite use in this respect to artists in whatever walk. At present, however, the sordid amount of remuneration which is afforded to our painters, will hardly admit of a very liberal and costly education being bestowed upon them; and those who have been so fortunate as to be thus instructed, seek a field for turning to account their acquirements in some profession where better hopes of liberal recompense are held out.

The ancient masters, whose great works possessed such high and such intellectual merits, were eager in the cultivation of their minds by polite literature and poetry, as they were also in the study of the Book of Revelation, where the noblest descriptions are to be read, and which, the more any one is refined and enlarged by polite learning, the more he is capacitated to admire. Indeed, if the mind of the artist is well cultivated, and amply stored with rich ideas, this is certain to manifest itself in the productions of his hand, which, as regards the intellectual developments that it achieves, draws upon the head. On the other hand, if the mind is barren of ideas, this will be sure to be displayed in the poverty of the productions of the hand. As a bramble cannot bear figs, nor a thistle grapes, so an uncultivated person cannot possibly produce works of imagination; nor, one void of noble sentiments, representations of either grandeur or beauty.

Those painters who have been the greatest as regards the intellect which their compositions displayed, were remarkable also for general vigour of mind. Indeed, in the case of the most eminent and intellectual of the artists of old, such as Raphael and Michael Angelo and Leonardo da Vinci and Rubens, we see men who possessed at once superior skill in the mechanical part

of the art, which they had perfected by judicious and constant practice; while their minds had been also cultivated to the full, and their vast powers completely developed, not only by artistical but by general study. Hence, the latter gave birth to the noblest conceptions, while the hand was prepared to obey the impulses of the mind, and to convert into substance what the other had shadowed. This I hold to be the real secret of the excellence displayed in the works of the ancient masters.

By the artists of ancient Greece, their poets and philosophers were well studied; Phidias formed his idea of the Olympian Jupiter from the lines in the first book of the 'Iliad,' in which the poet so sublimely represents the majesty of the god. His mind was also highly cultivated by all the literature and science of the day.

An artist in each department should be, moreover, not only highly cultivated, but should be well read in the book of nature, and, above all, of human nature. He ought not merely to be an observer of men, but in order to be so fully, should be himself a man of the world. As a warrior, who goes forth to wage war against a foreign State, should be acquainted not only with the strength of his own forces, but with the weak points of the enemy; so the artist in whatever walk, whose works are intended to attract and captivate mankind in general, should not merely be well acquainted with the principles and capabilities of his art, but with the turn of mind and habits of thought and disposition and character of those on whose minds his productions are intended to act.

Among the followers of art in ages gone by, many of their noblest performances, especially those from the sacred Scriptures, were composed under a strong religious feeling, which sank deep into their minds, and animated and impassioned them, and which they imparted to the productions on which they were engaged. This was particularly the case with Michael Angelo, as it was also with Milton, accompanied moreover with high intellectual cultivation. The disposition in question had a corresponding effect on the mind with inspiration itself, in elevating and invigorating it. The strongest passions and

emotions were thus rendered subservient to the highest ends. Indeed to conceive of, and to describe adequately, whether on the canvas or in verse, great religious subjects, the artist himself must have a mind animated with a deep religious feeling.

It is of course impossible that noble and sublime compositions should be produced by those who are destitute of noble and sublime conceptions. And even to appreciate nature fully, a large degree of intellectual cultivation is required. Mere mechanical knowledge of his art can no more make a great painter, than the capacity of writing a fair and legible hand can make a great poet.

As in literary composition feebleness and indistinctness of style are more often owing to want of knowledge and adequate conception of the subject than to deficiency in mere rhetorical power; so in painting, the feebleness and want of expression and vigour with which many subjects are depicted, are far more owing to a want of adequate conception of the design, than to any defect in the manual capacity to execute it.

He who would be a great painter, must, moreover, include in his studies not only the anatomy of the figure, but the expression of the face; and not merely so, but the workings of the soul by which this expression is caused. Mere mechanical skill in painting is but one out of many qualifications for making an artist, as dexterity in rhyming or fluency of utterance contribute but little to constitute a great poet or orator.

Architecture and acting suffer also from the defective education of those who professionally follow them, and whose minds require to be generally cultivated and refined in order to practise their art in a manner which will enable them to attract persons of a high intellectual standard. To architects especially is extensive mental cultivation essential both to discipline the taste, as also to exalt and ennoble the mind, and to store it with that historical and classical knowledge which is necessary to enable them to proceed correctly in the production of great and original performances in their particular art. So also with regard to costume and gardening. Taste in costume should at least be regulated by those of refined minds, although the manual

operators in the art be not thus endowed. Gardening, indeed, has the advantage of having its efforts generally directed by persons of cultivated taste and of liberal education. Hence the pleasure-grounds of our nobility and men of affluence afford the most perfect examples of art in this department. Among the Chinese, where gardening ranks high as a national art, those manually employed in this pursuit are men of extensive information, and rank among the followers of an intellectual profession. They are usually persons who have enlarged their minds by foreign travel, and improved their natural taste by the study of scenery of different kinds. So also in music as well as in painting, we often find considerably more taste, though perhaps far less dexterity in manual execution, displayed by amateurs than by professional persons, on account of the superior mental cultivation of the former.

IV. But while we must in some degree attribute the cause of our inferiority in art to the limited education, or the want of general cultivation of our artists, it is but justice that the public at large should in their turn also bear their share of the blame, as the defect to a great extent arises from the limited attention which on their part is ordinarily bestowed upon the arts, and the neglect which they experience as a branch of polite education. Not that it is here meant to be contended that every individual should learn to draw, or to attain mechanical skill in the arts, in which, indeed, a man may be very dexterous, without possessing any information respecting the higher principles by which they are guided; but it does appear most desirable that the true objects and capabilities of art should be generally understood, together with the grand and leading principles by which it is regulated. This alone can adapt any persons to become patrons of works of art.

Those especially who from their position or their acquirements seek to lead the public mind, who stand forth as the supporters of art, or who aim to direct the taste of the nation by their criticisms on works of art, ought necessarily to be endowed with a full knowledge both of the capabilities which it possesses, and of the legitimate ends for which it should be applied.

Such qualifications are also requisite in that very large and

influential portion of the higher orders of society, to whose judgment and discretion are committed the weighty task of erecting, or superintending the restoration of different national edifices throughout the country. How prodigiously, from the want of these capacities, have many of our noblest churches and public buildings in every part of the nation been deteriorated of late years! Our landscapes have also in many cases suffered grievously from the unsightly edifices by which they have been disfigured,—public buildings too, the cost of which might have afforded the opportunity of erecting structures which would have adorned instead of disgraced the neighbourhood. In many instances, moreover, the more picturesque the locality and the more beautiful the country where these atrocities have been perpetrated, the more outrageous is the violence done to nature,—as in the county gaols at Warwick and Shrewsbury, and the lunatic asylums at Hanwell and Colney Hatch.

The progress and the perfection attained by the arts in each country, and of each kind, will moreover to a large extent correspond with the measure in which the people at large are imbued with a taste for, and admire and enter into these pursuits;—are influenced by them, and are ardent in their promotion. Athens was as much distinguished from ordinary nations by the popularity, as by the perfection of the arts, where they were not only admired, but adored;—they formed part not merely of the popular recreations, but of the ordinary pursuits of the people.

One great reason why painting and the arts do not produce more extensive effect is, that they are not generally or really understood. Painting is considered as the mere art of imitating visual objects. Pictures are regarded not as striking instructors of the mind, but as ornamental furniture of the mansion.

If taste is a leading faculty of the mind, surely art ought to be made an essential branch of education. And not only one art, but all the arts should be cultivated, and cultivated together, each aiding and improving and extending the study of the other. For this purpose they ought not only to be taught with the other learned pursuits, but at the same insti-

tutions; and, in fact, to be fully useful, as regards their leading principles at least, should be blended with them, as well as with each other.

It necessarily follows, too, that the more correct and the more refined is the criticism of the public, the more judicious, and consequently advantageous will be the dispensation of its patronage. Vulgar prejudice is then less likely to influence, or meretricious excellence to pervert it.

One chief reason why among the Greeks, the arts reached the perfection which they there attained, and exercised the influence which they there acquired, was their extensive popularity among, and their cultivation by all ranks and classes. Thus, the whole mind of the nation was brought to bear upon them, as they influenced the whole mind. In return for the refinement which the arts promoted, the intellectual vigour and genius of the people were made to patronize the arts. Their orators and poets, as well as painters and sculptors, were inspirited and encouraged by the consciousness that their excellences were appreciated; and were urged on by the knowledge that their defects would be discovered.

Poetry and music with the Greeks were ever the recreations of the great and of the cultivated. Heroic poetry was among the earliest and the most influential of the arts of this class, which was accompanied and set off by music; and of all poetry and music, that of a sacred character produces the greatest effects.

Unless the national taste is improved, we can hardly hope that the arts will rise to any great degree of perfection. The instructors of the public mind will mislead instead of guiding those whom they profess to teach, and will be seduced and led astray by that meretricious ornament and false taste, against which they ought to warn others, and from which they should divert them to the admiration of real excellence.

It cannot be doubted, however, that there is a considerable love for art diffused throughout the nation, especially among the highly educated classes, who evince their pleasure in the contemplation of the masterpieces of art, whether in painting sculpture or architecture, by their thronging to the galleries

and collections on the Continent, as well as to those in our own country; and by the care and expense which they scruple not to incur in making and enriching their own collections. But even among these persons, a very limited knowledge only is possessed of the real principles and objects of these last-mentioned arts, although with poetry and music they are tolerably well acquainted. Indeed, from the want of a proper study of the arts of painting and sculpture, more especially, many men of talent know nothing of their capabilities and objects; and such persons form their ideas, or rather inadequate notions of them, from certain paltry performances which they have been in the habit of admiring. It is only when their capacities are known fully to persons of genius and cultivation, and are made a branch of general study, that their real importance will be acknowledged, and that the patronage of the great will be extensively afforded to them.

In the study of works of art of high intellectual merit, although we perceive not their excellence at first, by degrees it becomes developed to our minds. As we improve in our taste, their value becomes apparent to us. The very cultivation which they serve to afford, qualifies us to estimate their worth. It was not any deficiency in these works, but our own deficiency, which prevented us from doing justice to them originally. Our true and ample appreciation of them is the surest proof of our own advancement.

Nevertheless, although the public may not be always fitted to decide upon the most exalted and refined efforts in art, yet of art as a whole they are fully competent judges, more especially as to whether it is true to nature, and rightly appeals to the passions and feelings. They are, to the artistical world what a jury is to a court of justice. They may be ignorant of technicalities, but they are able to form the most correct opinion concerning facts. And as regards the higher qualities of art, those of acknowledged abilities and judgment here will always take the lead, while the suffrages of the public will support their opinion where it is well founded, and may often correct it where it is capricious.

The popularity of Shakspeare and Milton, Raphael and

Michael Angelo, Flaxman and Wren, Handel and Garrick, and the universal homage paid to them, are as satisfactory testimonials to their real merit, as is the opinion of the critics, of the learned and men of genius. And if it be said that the public estimate only lower and commonplace attractions, and do not appreciate higher excellences; it should be borne in mind that many of the most popular of the great works alluded to, are deficient in commonplace vulgar merit, and are distinguished mainly by their sterling qualities.

V. For the general improvement of the public taste it is highly desirable that galleries of works of art of superior merit should be established in the nation, which might be open to the public, where the finest productions could be viewed,—works which are fitted to form a true standard of excellence by which to judge. For this end it also appears on every account to be expedient that copies of all the best pictures on the Continent, as also of those in several private collections in this country, should be procured, and placed in one collection in the metropolis, for which, as a national object, there could be no difficulty in obtaining leave from the possessors of the original paintings.

A national gallery of really good copies made from the originals by artists of eminence, of all the most renowned paintings, together with a corresponding collection of genuine casts from the most celebrated statues, would constitute a most valuable school, not only for artists but for the people at large, whose notions of art would be greatly raised by this means. Indeed, the entire collection thus formed, would, both in an intellectual and an artistical point, be one of the most attractive most useful and most complete in Europe; while the entire cost of it would not exceed a sum which is very trifling for a national object. There can be no doubt, moreover, that for the purposes of study and instruction, good copies of great works are far preferable to undoubted originals by second-rate masters. Besides which the generality cannot discern the difference between an original and a copy; and with respect to some ancient works of art of considerable merit, the question of their originality is undetermined by the highest authorities

on the subject. Indeed, in certain cases, it may happen that the copy is not only equal, but superior to the original. As for instance where the copy was made by a skilful artist soon after the completion of the original work, and the original,—which was the case with many of Sir Joshua Reynolds' works,—has subsequently faded, or has been injured by damp or repainting; as happened to the famous picture at Milan of 'The Last Supper,' by Leonardo da Vinci, a copy of which, made by a painter of talent soon after the completion of the work, is in the possession of the Royal Academy, and is of course now of more intrinsic value than the original. It is of great importance, moreover, in case of accidents of this kind, that good and correct copies of great works of art should be always made.

VI. But although the arts have a beneficial influence over a nation in refining and elevating it, they may also have a tendency to render the people effeminate, and too much to call off their attention from martial and manly occupations. They consequently require to be blended with other studies, which may not so much counteract as correct their influence in this respect. Indeed, art when followed by itself not only over-refines the mind of the individual devoted to it, but over-refines also itself, and consequently requires to be blended with other pursuits, as much on its own account as for the sake of those who follow it. Thus it degenerates and becomes corrupted. With the loss of its vigour decay soon commences.

Art is to intellectual pursuits in general, what the flower is to the plant. It is the ornament, but not the substantial part of the vegetable from which it derives its support, as art does from knowledge in general. The arts should therefore be blended both with each other, and with pursuits of a different nature. Any art studied by itself alone, is too absorbing and exclusive, and too narrowing. If studied with other arts only, the occupation is too refining. If followed in conjunction with other pursuits, each aids the other in enlarging invigorating ennobling, and indeed in perfecting the mind.

The arts should, moreover, be blended with and should exercise an influence over the pursuits of life; and the pursuits

of life should in their turn be blended with, and exercise an influence over the arts. In this respect, perhaps, it is that there is the greatest difference between the ancients and the moderns. The former made art a part of every-day life; of their occupations, of their studies, and of their recreations. The latter consider it as a distinct pursuit altogether; as a trifling occupation, and fitted only for holidays.

It appears also to be a great disadvantage that we study art in the same dry uninteresting manner in which the other branches of literature are wont to be pursued. Thus, while reading the works of the great poets and orators of old, the attention of the scholar is in many cases mainly directed to the grammatical structure and philological correctness of the sentences, while the beauties and real excellences of the writer are wholly overlooked, or not even sought for. Thus, too, in the study of painting and sculpture, the grammar only, or mere mechanical branch of the art, is too often alone attended to, while all its higher intellectual merits and capabilities are utterly lost sight of. As in the case of art and science, the two should not only both be studied, but both studied together.

Hence the study of the arts and of general literature requires to be more closely united, and more generally followed together: so that, as among artists, their attention to literature should be combined with that of their own professional and artistical pursuits; among the general cultivators of learning, the study of the arts should form an essential branch of education. The arts are indeed not so much adapted for a separate and independent pursuit, as to embellish and refine other departments of literature with which therefore they should be united. Beautiful and enchanting and ennobling as is their nature, they require some standard for support which they may embrace, and which they would embellish; as if left of themselves to run wild, without being trained to adorn some of the more substantial occupations of life, they are but too apt to prove barren; while aided in this mode they not only increase in their own fruitfulness, but adorn and enrich those branches of intellectual knowledge round which they cling.

The arts of poetry and eloquence, and also music, we do, indeed, find pretty generally blended with the other branches of learning, while painting and sculpture are neglected. It is therefore only when these latter arts are made to form an essential part of education, that the real principles upon which they are founded will be understood; that their capacities and their utility will be duly appreciated, and that they will, like the other departments of the arts which have been so followed, advance to eminence, and high intellectual merit, in this nation.

It is impossible that any one who has duly considered the purposes for which the arts are fitted to be employed,—whether as regards the improvement and advancement of our manufactures, our literary works, which they are capable of enriching and illustrating, or the general refinement and ennobling of the mind;—or whether in relation to the benefits they may confer on each individual who studies them, or on the nation in which they are cultivated;—can hesitate to pronounce them to be well deserving of being adopted as a general branch of education, and in favour of which also the example of the greatest and most refined geniuses that the world has produced have borne ample and honourable testimony.

But it has been said by some that this is not the age of art, which was the province of the ancients; and that the era of science is that during which we exist. That practical science is that which draws into its vortex the attention of the great mass of mankind at the present day, I have already observed. On that account, however, art is now more than ever essential, in order to counteract whatever is debasing and sordid in the mere practical avaricious pursuit of the former, and by which the minds of so many must be influenced. As observed in the concluding section of the first chapter of this work, "the two should be ever united, and should advance hand-in-hand together." Art should be employed in elevating and refining the pursuit of science.

Perhaps, indeed, it is not too much to assert, considering how much this country owes to her commerce, and how entirely

in the present day science seems to monopolize the whole mind of the world; that of all ages which the world has yet passed through, this is the one in which art is chiefly required, where its high influences are most needed; and that our own is of all the nations of the world that in which at the present day the extensive cultivation of art is essential.

In one respect art has in modern times received constant and essential aid from science. The skill and excellence with which engravings of different works of art in painting sculpture and architecture have been executed, are proofs of this fact; and so far at least the moderns have far excelled the ancients in their most palmy days. Art and science are here not only united, but aiding and co-operating with each other. Whatever is most excellent in engraving as regards the dexterity of the workmanship and the closeness of the imitation, belongs, moreover, not to art but to science.

VII. I will here venture to originate a proposal for a new order of artistical design, the importance of which for the furtherance of art in its higher departments, will be obvious to all who are familiar with its leading principles, and through which I hope to see enlisted in the service of art some of those minds from which have emanated ideas of a grandeur and sublimity peculiarly suitable for the endowment of works of this description.

The theory here propounded is that the conception of a grand artistical composition may be well and completely effected by one particular person gifted with powers applicable for the purpose, but who may not be possessed of the endowments which would enable him to embody his ideas upon canvas; while by another person those ideas, when they have been intelligibly expressed, may be embodied on canvas, although such latter person may not be gifted with the capacity to have originated or conceived the ideas or composition so to be embodied. By this contrivance, the aid of individuals of poetical genius may be availed of to contribute in the composition of pictorial works, which might be designed through a written or verbal description of them by the man of mind, and executed by the manually skilful artist; the former supplying as

it were the soul, the latter the body of the composition. In architecture this is to a certain extent already effected, the builder doing all the material work, while the architect supplies only the design.

For instance, when a man of real genius determines upon the production of a great work of art, there are, as already pointed out,* two distinct and independent processes which have to be accomplished, and in the performance of each of which men vary greatly according to the bent and quality of the particular talents with which they are endowed. 1. In the first place, ideas adequate and suitable of the representation to be achieved, are formed in the mind of the artist. 2. In the second place, the work is manually executed, according to the design effected by these ideas. Those especially of the highest genius are wont to create in their minds designs very far superior to anything that their mechanical dexterity enables them to accomplish; while many of a lower grade of talent excel much more in manual dexterity than in mental design, and their performances in the former are much better than in the latter. Indeed, it not unfrequently happens even among painters, that those who have the noblest conceptions, are the least skilful in the mechanical department of the art; and that those who are the most skilful in the mechanical department of the art, are the least distinguished for noble conceptions. By the adoption of the proposal here made, the department best fitted for each, is that which each would follow. And the division thus made, is but in accordance with what has been already successfully tried in other departments of art, where the intellectual portion of the composition, the design and contrivance of the representation, is arranged by the head of one person; and the whole manual execution of the work is effected by the practical skill and dexterity and hand of another. The accomplishment of this in architectural efforts has already been alluded to. But in sculpture also, while the artist designs and perfects the work, the marble is shapen and carved by another person. In musical composition also, one man invents or designs the melody, while another executes the per-

* *Vide ante*, Vol. I. Chapter VII. Sect. 2.

formance. In this art therefore, as in painting, the skill requisite for the two efforts engages minds of a very different order. So also in costume and gardening, while one designs, another executes what he has designed; and for the two performances persons of qualities and acquirements altogether dissimilar are required.

To designs thus produced I propose to give the general name of Graphopneumata, or spirits or souls of pictures,—γραφῶν πνεύματα,—which the man of intellect and imagination will originate, and describe graphically in the way I have set forth; while the painter will in his turn supply them with bodies by depicting these forms or scenes upon canvas.

Considering what totally different talents, not only as regards their extent but their quality, are required to produce works of high intellectual merit, and those of great mechanical excellence; the real wonder is, not that the same person should not often be adapted for both purposes, but that capacities for both efforts should ever, which is, indeed, but seldom the case, be united in the same person. And yet people, and those of experience and practical knowledge in art, seem to conclude that the possession of one power almost necessarily implies that of the other.

Another proof of the feasibility of the proposal here made may be deduced from the circumstance that a correct and faithful, and even forcible transcript of any painting may be effected by a full and accurate verbal description of it, so as to excite in the mind of the reader just and accurate and adequate ideas of the painting. And if a picture may be copied in this mode, surely an original painting may be in a corresponding manner produced from a verbal design. In other words, if a picture may be translated into a verbal description, a verbal description may, with equal efficiency, be translated into a picture.

Chaucer, Spenser, Shakspeare, Milton, and Dante, especially excelled in their power of describing in the most vivid and graphic manner certain scenes, so as almost to convey to the mind the same ideas as those which would be afforded by a pictorial representation.

If we refer also to the writings of some of the most celebrated painters,—take for instance, Northcote's 'Life of Titian,'—both in the composition of the author, and in the extracts from the letters and other literary productions of renowned artists, we shall find several very effective and graphic descriptions of certain celebrated works of art, which serve at once almost to bring immediately and forcibly before the mind's eye of the reader the very pictures themselves. Indeed, I am much inclined to believe that the most advantageous course to be pursued by every artist who aspires to produce a work of a highly imaginative or intellectual character, would be first to compose it completely in all its details in his own mind, and then to write out fully the description of what he has conceived, after which he should proceed to translate this into a pictorial design upon paper. By this means the mind would be left entirely free to act, and to express the ideas which it conceives. Moreover, in this important stage of the proceeding, it would be unshackled by the restraints which any deficiency in pictorial skill might impose in the construction of the design, and so hinder the full force and energy of the soul, and of the efforts of the imagination, being poured into the composition, and allowed to animate it.

One of the most excellent and striking works of art in modern sculpture, Chantrey's 'Sleeping Children' in Lichfield Cathedral, was suggested and designed upon the principle here propounded. The fond mother described to the ingenious sculptor how her loved ones lay together in their sleep, locked in each other's arms; and from this description Chantrey formed in his mind, and aided by the design of Stodhart to whom he communicated the circumstance, afterwards modelled the exquisitely beautiful sculpture* which now stands a durable monument of his skill, as well as to the memory of those to whom it was erected.

As regards the general effect and background of the picture, the ordinary directions of the designer might no doubt be quite efficient for this purpose; and in the arrangement of drapery and costume recourse might be had to real articles of this kind for models where necessary. If any difficulty was experienced

* 'Life of Stodhart,' by Mrs. Bray, p. 184.

in describing the attitudes of the figures, moveable representations of the human form, such as are now in use, might be availed of. And with respect to the delineation of expression and character and passion in the various countenances, the accomplishment of this might be greatly aided by the suggestion already made in this work for a classification of the features. Thus the highest mental power and the utmost degree of manual dexterity might be united in the composition of the same performance.

The remarks here made with regard to designs for epic composition in painting, are equally applicable to designs in sculpture, and peculiarly so to architectural composition, in which latter art it is especially desirable when an important structure is to be planned, that the architect should conceive in his mind, conjure up before him in all its grand and stately proportions, the form of the edifice itself, such as his own genius, had it the power of instantaneously summoning it into existence, would have commanded to rise, unfettered by the trammels which mechanical laws impose on the reducing the design to a visible form.

Many individuals of extensive genius have exhibited a faculty for pictorial composition of the highest order, but who have never handled a pencil, or possessed any mechanical knowledge of the art. Not only, indeed, among the poets are examples in proof of this assertion numerous, but among prose writers also we have instances of the production of typographical paintings which in design and composition and expression rival the most vivid and powerful efforts of the pencil. The narrations of Sterne in force and minuteness almost equal the masterpieces of Teniers and our own Wilkie. The high-wrought and gorgeous descriptions of Burke and of Macaulay nearly approach those of the most highly gifted of the old masters in the epic and dramatic styles. Had these great writers followed the art of painting as a pursuit, it cannot be doubted that men so poetically qualified, and so mentally cultivated would have excelled greatly in this art, and have produced some sublime and astonishing masterpieces, independent of any deficiency in mechanical execution under which they might have laboured.

VIII. After a full investigation of the subject discussed in the present chapter, it must be concluded, indeed the fact is too obvious to admit of any doubt, that the arts, especially those of painting sculpture and architecture, have not as yet been engrafted in England. The works, even the best of them, that we have produced, and, above all, the efforts some time ago made to acertain the degree of original talent for design in the epic style existent among our artists by the prizes offered in Westminster Hall for the cartoons, serve but to testify to the incontrovertibility of this assertion. Although in poetry and eloquence, and also in acting, and in the practice at least of music, such high efforts have been achieved, nothing which yet can be termed an English school as regards painting and sculpture and architecture has hitherto been established among us; for, although the production of several clever artists can be appealed to, yet no works possessing in themselves sufficient character and independent feeling, have as yet sprung forth to warrant our boasting of such a distinction. Our only original, and, as it were, natural style, which appears engrafted here, is that of producing portraits in the art of painting, and in effecting busts and statues, the representation of real individuals, in the art of sculpture. But efforts of this class will hardly be allowed of sufficient importance of themselves to entitle us to claim the establishment of a school of art. In works of a high intellectual order, by which alone the character and genius of such a school is to be decided, it is that we are unfortunately so deficient. In landscape painting, for which but a limited portion of original and inventive genius is required, especially in water-colours, and which, as a mechanical branch, is a discovery originated in this country, we have attained a considerable degree of excellence. In engraving also, which is, however, but a very inferior branch with regard to intellectuality, requires no inventive power, and is, indeed, strictly rather a science than an art, we have rivalled if not exceeded all our predecessors of bygone days. In sculpture no truly great or original work has as yet been completed worthy of being placed in competition with the mighty performances of Phidias or Michael Angelo; although some few productions of considerable beauty

have been achieved, and certain of the designs which have been made for epic compositions in this branch of the arts, would have done honour to the greatest artists of the ancient schools.

In the style of our modern architecture there is hardly anything, if anything at all, that is actually original. Our ideas of the gothic we derive from an age which we regard as barbarous. Indeed, with respect to architecture, if that alone were to be taken as a test of the advancement or decline of art in this country,—and it is the one which, of those in which mechanical skill is required, has received the largest share of attention,—it would seem that our progress has retrograded instead of advanced, if we compare our modern with our ancient edifices. How few cathedrals or churches erected in our own age, can vie or even bear comparison with those which were upraised by our ancestors! Although no castles or abbeys are now required, yet in the erection of churches and halls, and various public buildings, the fullest opportunities for the patronage and exercise of this art are afforded, beyond even what in days of old were presented, and so largely availed of, to say nothing of the restoration and preservation of those now existing. The mode, however, in which our venerable and beautiful edifices have been mutilated or suffered to fall into decay, and the unsightly and uncouth fashion in which modern buildings of all kinds have been upraised, afford at once sad and sure proofs how trifling is the influence which art has hitherto exercised on the national mind.

Perhaps as regards architecture, in which art we have so many noble specimens in this country, which derive sublimity and even value from their age as well as their excellence of design, the mere restoration of them in a suitable and tasteful manner, may serve amply to employ all the little skill and genius of this degenerate and parsimonious age. Indeed, the reparation of decayed ancient works of art, particularly those of architecture, is that to which our efforts may at the present day be advantageously and successfully directed, even though the age be condemned as too degenerate to produce new works that may rival those of a period superciliously pro-

nounced inferior to it in intellectual power and enterprise, as well as in invention. It may be, however, that the preservation of what our ancestors have upraised, is the utmost that we can effect. In many cases, even this appears to be a task too great for modern degeneracy; and too often, both in this country and on the Continent, modern cupidity demands the destruction of these venerable relics, merely to make room for replacing them by buildings for gain or commerce.

Restoration appears, indeed, not only to be the special avocation of the present age, but that for which its capacities are peculiarly adapted. Lacking the particular intellectual qualifications requisite for designing original works, we do possess all the mechanical skill and knowledge of the past which are essential to render perfect any performances in the restorative process. In architecture not only all our restorations, but all our original efforts, are but attempts to copy, with very slight and trivial variations, the models produced in periods preceding our own. And in painting and sculpture, too, this is more or less the case with most of our artists. Copying and restoration seem, moreover, to go very suitably hand-in-hand together, and are both especially adapted to the present age. Possibly therefore, as regards works of art, these humble efforts are the utmost and the best which we of this age are likely to effect. If so, we must be content to live upon the past, and to preserve to our posterity what has been transmitted to us from preceding periods, instead of aiming at the more ambitious task of creating anew for those who are to come after us.

In the case of sculptural and architectural works, the copies made of them through the aid of photography are the most perfect that can be produced, colour here not being requisite, and far exceeding in accuracy the most exquisite casts, as I have particularly remarked with regard to the photographs of the 'Apollo' and 'Laocoon' which I have seen at Rome. In the case of photographs, however, as in that of paintings, the representation affords a view of the object from one point only, and is so far allied rather to painting than either to sculpture or architecture, being, in fact, a sort of hybrid production between the two.

In the original construction of architectural edifices of an important character, we should always bear in mind that we are labouring not only for our contemporaries, but for our posterity also. Those who have gone before us have bequeathed to us liberally costly treasures of art, and we reap all the benefit of their experience. Whatever we give to posterity is but an instalment of the debt we owe to those whose posterity we are.

Poetry and eloquence may, in certain respects, be deemed to be more engrafted in this country than are painting sculpture and architecture, inasmuch as, in the first place, these arts sprang up here as indigenous to the soil, without any aid from other countries; and in the next place, they have been from time immemorial constantly followed, although nothing in the shape of a distinct school has ever been established; while the isolated productions of eminent merit which have occasionally appeared, have served to characterize the efforts of these arts among us.

The drama and the art of music have, to the extent already mentioned, been long established in England, although in the latter of these arts we can hardly boast of a distinct school, so few original compositions of leading merit having been originated in this country, and such extensive resort having been made to the artists of other lands for their compositions.

Costume as a separate art has never been engrafted, nor even recognized here. Nor have we in this country, as in several of those on the Continent, and as was extensively the case in the Middle Ages, anything that may be called a national costume, the picturesque development of which among some people, is of itself sufficient to exalt it to the rank of an art, and evinces how capable it is of having applied to it all the principles of artistical regulation.

Gardening, as an art, may be said to be thoroughly engrafted among us; and although we can boast of no distinct school of this art, yet the style of English gardening and pleasure-grounds is peculiarly distinctive in itself, is borrowed from no other people, and is superior to any other in accomplishing the fullest development of nature, with the smallest degree of restraint on her own efforts.

IX. If, therefore, as I contend that we are entitled to do, we may judge from the eminence which in the arts of poetry and eloquence we have attained, that we are not deficient in intellectual power to enable us to rival the most celebrated performances of the ancients in either art; and if, as I have lately observed, in mechanical execution of works of art we are not even now deficient; there is in reality no reason to suppose that when the obstacles which at present retard our progress are removed, we may in every respect, and in the highest and most noble of their characteristics, rival the schools of old, and produce artists whose compositions in the epic style shall be deemed worthy, not only of being placed beside those of Phidias and Raphael and Michael Angelo, but which, in many respects, shall be deemed superior to them; as although we doubtless labour under disadvantages by which they were not incumbered, we have also advantages of the highest order of which they were destitute.

The Greeks at one period of the progress of art among them, were as wanting in the principles, in knowledge of, and in genius for art, as any of the modern nations have ever been; and the influences which affected and elevated them, are equally capable of operation among us.

Not only have the productions of our poets and eloquent writers afforded evidence that there is no national incompetency for works of art, but occasionally, even in painting, efforts have been put forth which yield incontrovertible proof that there is in reality no lack of artistical talent among us, and that we need only proper opportunities to bring it out. The gold is genuine, but it requires to be raised from the mine. Genius may exist, but it will not develope itself unless a favourable period arrives for doing so. The ground may be full of seeds, but they will fail to spring up until the winter has passed over, and the genial rays of summer have given them vitality.

The causes which I have pointed out, are, I think, quite sufficient to account for our present deficiency, as I am also convinced that the possibility of our being able to afford an entire and all-sufficient remedy for this deficiency is beyond a doubt.

In poetry and eloquence we have, moreover, had the great disadvantages to contend with of a language far less harmonious and melodious than that of either Greece or Rome; and yet with materials so unfavourable, we have rivalled the poets and orators of both these nations, and in those very qualities, too, for which our native tongue seemed least adapted. As regards painting and sculpture, we possess not only all the mechanical skill and knowledge with which the ancients were endowed; but the numerous modern scientific discoveries which have been achieved since their day, afford us very great advantages over them in every particular as regards the manual operations connected with art.

The English language, although uncouth and inharmonious, and apparently ill adapted as a medium for poetical or oratorical use, is yet of vast fertility for the purpose of conveying, with philosophical accuracy and effect ideas of different subjects into the mind, especially those of a scientific or philosophical nature. Like the commerce of the world that enriches our ports, and which is poured into them from every corner of the globe, each language of each age has helped to add to it by its contribution of some phrase or expression of importance,—retained possibly on account of their peculiar value,—and it has gleaned from each the choicest gems.

In its force, freedom, and philosophical accuracy, it reflects well the mind of the nation which has produced the most renowned philosophers and poets, whose productions have been peculiarly of this cast, and have been deeply imbued with this feeling;—who, moreover, have both largely influenced, and been largely influenced by, its character and adaptation.

Although we have not the advantage of the ancients in studying the naked form, and in viewing daily the folds of rich drapery; yet, as I have before observed, we have the higher capabilities of the art in expression, and character, and passion, still to exert; and we have also the full benefit of the experience of our predecessors, with far greater mechanical skill than they possessed. If some temples have been destroyed, the venerable age and hoary ruin of those that remain add immensely to their effect; while the grandest objects of all, those

of nature, in her mountains and seas, and rivers and plains, and the glories of the heavens, still continue unchanged.

One grand principle to be kept in view as regards modern art, is to adapt and accommodate it to the spirit and genius of the times, instead of following only the fashions of an age bygone. Poetry and music have done this, as have also costume and gardening. Why should not painting and sculpture and architecture do so too? In each age genius is the same; but nothing is so liable to fetter genius, as trying to force it to move in an element for which it is not fitted. Greek and Latin are still refining and ennobling, if used in the study of the great works of antiquity; but it would be absurd to apply them as *media* of communication in the ordinary affairs of business.

Probably each nation, and indeed each individual have their own particular capacity for excelling in certain branches of art; as one has a taste for beauty, another for grandeur, another for pathos or humour; and it is doubtless desirable to cultivate this peculiar talent, wherever it is developed. In the establishment of an English school of art, our main object should be to carry out to the utmost, and to afford the fullest development of the national genius, and with respect to each of the arts alike. Both those peculiar arts, and those peculiar departments of them, as also those peculiar tastes should especially be encouraged and cultivated, for which a particular national genius is exhibited. On the other hand, every opportunity ought to be availed of by means of a school of art, to correct those faults and deficiencies which appertain to the character of the nation. And in addition to this, every art that is cultivated among us should, by the aid of such an institution, be carried to the utmost perfection consistent with the nature and bent of the national genius and capacities, and with the existence also of the various national artistical deficiencies, which equally require to be taken into account.

The resuscitation of the art of using painted and stained glass, and the extent to which windows so formed are now introduced into churches and other public buildings, afford a very eligible and ample opportunity for the cultivation of the grand style of

composition in painting; and this, I maintain, on several distinct grounds. Grandeur of outline is completely attainable in compositions of this kind, even supposing that attention to minute detail is not so easily or so successfully carried out; consequently works of this description ought especially to be distinguished by, and indeed to owe their chief excellence to, their possession of many of the highest qualities of art. For moonlight scenes, and for representing the appearance of firelight, and the peculiar glow which that casts, this branch of art is fitted beyond all other kinds of painting.

Painting on glass appears indeed to present a grand opportunity for the resuscitation of epic painting. Efforts of this class, which are suitable for the adornment of our churches and public buildings, are all of an important character. And in consequence of the improvements effected in later times in the making of glass, by means of which the painting might now be contained in one large pane instead of being divided into portions on account of the smallness of the different panes, either first-rate works of art may be copied on glass, and reproduced with all the beauty dignity and effect, and even more than the vividness of hues and tints and light and shade, of the original works; or original productions of this character may make their appearance upon glass instead of canvas, rivalling if not excelling those of the old masters. The colours in several of the ancient windows are remarkably rich in tone, and evince how much might be effected in this style of art, in which nothing has as yet been accomplished in the way of genuine epic composition, and no attempt has been made to delineate expression or character, or even to produce either grandeur or beauty as regards form. On the other hand, the complete success with which several exquisite works of art have been copied on glass in the china manufactory at Sèvres, suffices to prove what might be accomplished here, and the exquisite manner in which the tints and chiaro-oscuro may be brought out in efforts of this kind. For grand compositions painted on glass, ample patronage might be found in the extensive demand for them to adorn the windows of our churches and public buildings, whether they are resorted to for the purposes of illustration,

to commemorate great events, or as memorials of departed worth.

As in the case of sculpture, the importance and costly nature of these undertakings—as also the public character which they possess—particularly demand that they should be works of high intellectual merit, and such as are calculated to produce ennobling and elevating effects upon the people, to whose constant gaze they are ever exposed. The strong contrasts in colours, and light and shade, the clear outline, and the vigour with which forms of every kind can be depicted, peculiarly adapt designs in painted or stained glass for compositions of an epic character. Single figures or compositions, in which only a few persons are represented, are moreover well fitted both for works in stained glass and for epic paintings, and they especially admit of being endowed with that nobleness of form and expression, which is characteristic of the epic. As regards expression more particularly, and the delineation of character and emotion, these are fully attainable in glass compositions, as they are also especially suited for compositions of an epic class. According as the art of painting on glass rises out of its present very imperfect condition, will its capabilities and its adaptation for the noble purposes here proposed become more apparent, and its application to this end will no doubt be ultimately and completely recognized.

The manufacture at the present day of glass in large panes, so different to those in former times, of itself suggests a different mode of painting on glass, and affords an opportunity for producing works far more graceful grand and important, than what have hitherto been attempted upon that material. It seems, moreover, almost puerile, as we are now freed from the trammels which the ancient mode of glazing our windows with small panes imposed, that we should still adhere to the same cramped and confined style in which those manacles compelled us to limp. It is no doubt proper to have ancient rather than modern subjects represented in the windows of buildings the architecture of which belongs to ages past. But it does not from this by any means follow that the mode of depicting those ancient scenes should be rude and barbarous, quite out of cha-

racter with the taste and refinement exhibited in the style of the building itself, even supposing that at the age in which the style of architecture prevailed in which the building is erected, the art of painting was at a very low ebb in this country; but which can form no reasonable excuse for reviving, or seeking to resuscitate, that barbarity.

In some of the modern painted glass, as may be seen, for instance, in the Cathedral of Cologne, the design is natural and graceful, such as is observed in compositions in painting of the present age, free from the quaint and stiff manner of the ordinary antique representations where this material is employed, but which is by no means necessary in such efforts.

On the whole, there appears to be no reason, either intellectual moral or physical, why works of art in our day should not merely rival those of Raphael and Rembrandt and Michael Angelo, but why they should not also excel them. The only limits to the perfection of art are placed by the capacity of the mind, and mechanical skill. In the latter we far exceed the times passed by. In the former, too, we are in no respect behind them as regards the actual development of intellectual power, but only in its application to the arts of painting and sculpture; and we have the advantage of their experience to guide us in our career. The only real limit to the progress of the arts, is the conception of the mind; as far as the latter is able to imagine grand scenes, the hand may be taught to delineate them on the canvas.

Nor ought we to feel surprised that striking geniuses are so rare in our day among the producers of works of art of each kind, when we consider that among the nations of old they were but few, and in each case far between. Greece produced but one Phidias, but one Homer, and but one Demosthenes; Rome, only one Virgil and one Cicero. And in more modern times, Raphael and Michael Angelo and Dante in Italy, Rubens in Flanders, Rembrandt in Holland, and Shakspeare and Milton in England, have been as isolated as any of the great artists of old.

Indeed, in poetry as well as in painting, may we not hope for a revival of art? And I cannot but think that some very

sublime and noble topics for composition of this kind may be afforded by many subjects both in history and in Scripture, which are as yet unavailed of in this respect, as also by several martial events of modern days, which have been as heroic as any in the ages gone by. Although the armour of these times is far less picturesque than was that of the middle ages; yet, on the other hand, the mode of conducting war, more especially as regards the majesty of our ships of battle, and the use of artillery in warfare, afford far more scope for grand poetical description than did the comparatively puny engagements of old. In truth, there was nothing among the ancients so sublime and almost celestial, as a great naval encounter in the present century.

As regards historical topics, events which are distant, like distant objects in landscape scenery, generally present a more artistic aspect than those which are close at hand. Nevertheless, passion and feeling, and all the elements of romance, are the same in every age, and in every transaction, whether near or remote. And although in our day castles and cathedrals are no longer upraised, yet the mouldering and venerable forms of those which have been transmitted to us, are more picturesque than if they were built by our own hands.

Certain of the apocryphal writings of the New Testament, which formed the foundation of the miracle plays, might advantageously be availed of; and some of these latter may be re-written with considerable effect, as several old plays served for the foundation of Shakspeare's, as did the 'Adamus Exul' of Grotius for Milton's 'Paradise Lost.' On the Continent these performances are being revived with great spirit, and may, possibly, ere long, be resuscitated in this country. The topics which they embrace have supplied the noblest themes for compositions in painting. Why should they not in poetry also prove equally inspiring? Sacred tragedy has as yet been unattempted, although on many accounts it seems to afford at once the fittest and the widest field on which the Muse might exert her powers. The life of Abraham, the career of David, and many other events of a corresponding character in sacred history, contain a mine of poetical wealth

which has only to be worked up in order to render a due return. More especially, the history of Joseph forms in many respects an admirable basis for a tragic representation, and is well adapted for a miracle-play, alike as regards the variety and romantic nature of its incidents, the touching quality of its scenes, the characters that figure in its narrative, the many extraordinary and striking features with which it abounds, the strange mutations of fortune which are recorded, and, not least, the tragic issue of the narrative itself. The primitive pastoral scenes which it contains, contrasted with the mode of life in early Egypt, would furnish a background to the picture of great interest, admitting of very graphic description.

X. Complaint has been made of the poverty of style as regards certain of the arts at the present day, more especially that of architecture, and the inefficiency of some of its orders to be the vehicle for calling forth those ideas allied to the picturesque which formed the subject of a previous chapter.* To a certain extent the same remark may possibly apply to painting as well, and to dramatic acting also, as it doubtless does to costume. It is in architecture, however, that it is most obvious.

In each of the arts the circumstance which appears most likely to lead to the invention of new orders, or the development of original styles or systems, is the breaking up and abandonment of those which have become old and obsolete. So long as the latter remain in fashion, the majority of persons will always be disposed to follow them, and to keep in the accustomed track. As soon, however, as the ancient landmarks are lost sight of, men at once exercise their ingenuity to discover a new path. The compass would never have been resorted to if the planets had not occasionally been obscured. If London had not been burnt down, the same style of building with wood, and with pestilence-breeding casements, might have been continued almost to the present time.

As botanists obtain new kinds of plants by sowing seeds of plants already well known, from which those of a fresh stock

* *Vide ante*, Vol. I. Chapter VIII.

occasionally spring up; so may new ideas be generated by the productions of young minds whose powers are untrammelled, and in whose souls ideas may perchance vegetate of a species altogether differing from any of those which the old soil has been in the habit of rearing by grafts, or by shoots from the parent tree. Young minds have the advantage, at any rate, of being free from the habits and prejudices which restrain the efforts of those of a later age, especially where originality is required to be exerted. On the other hand, juvenile adventurers in art lie under the disadvantage of not possessing so rich a collection of ideas as those of later age, nor of being gifted with the same amount of experience in using them. And it is a remarkable fact that the noblest productions of an imaginative kind, such as those of Homer and Milton and Michael Angelo, were brought forth mainly in their old age.

We have already seen from our researches in the earlier part of this work,* that the forms assumed by the trunks of trees, and by their leaves individually, as also by caves and rocks and other objects in nature, including also several animal frames, first originated different architectural forms. In like manner might the observation of these same models under different aspects, lead to the invention of new styles in architecture. Nevertheless, subjects the most remote from solid and stationary figures have occasionally served as types for architectural forms; as in the case of the Flamboyant window in architecture, the model of which is a waving flame of fire. The spiral stationary flame, and that which is serpentine, might also be made to supply suggestions for this purpose.

While trying to originate new styles of architecture by imitating and combining different objects in nature, it has several times happened that I have been led to delineate forms which are already recognized and adopted as the types of existing orders. But this proves more than anything else could do the correctness of the theory which I have advanced, as to their having been all originally invented in this mode, and

* *Vide ante*, Vol. I. Chapter III. Sects. 1, 7.

consequently that this is the proper method to pursue in order to create new styles in future.

Another strong reason which might be urged in favour of endeavouring to invent a new style in architecture, is the nature of the materials now in use for building purposes, so entirely different in every way to what the ancients possessed, and which both prompt and afford the opportunity for developing fresh styles. Of these materials, cast-iron is one of the most remarkable, and it affords the means for effecting designs of a much finer nature and texture than does either stone or wood, and by which the forms of foliage and flowers, and also of feathers, might be imitated with delicacy and elegance. Indeed, iron as a material for some kinds of architectural decoration, where this is aided by sculpture, or where great delicacy or fine work are required, as in minute tracery or net-work, or the termination or mouldings of pinnacles or windows, is extremely valuable and of essential service; in which respect science lends important aid to art in our day, of which in former ages it had no opportunity of availing. As regards the richness and the correctness of architectural decoration, much may be attained by means of this material, far beyond what has hitherto been even attempted.

During the early ages of art, the workers in iron and other metals were artists, and exhibited considerable taste and skill, as we see in the productions of Quentin Matsys, and others of his school. In these days, when the facilities for moulding and working in iron are so much greater, this department of art is surely entitled to no less attention, and to command no less talent in its application. Until this is effected, we can hardly expect to witness any very important results from the application of iron to architectural purposes.

Another circumstance which is highly favourable to architectural improvements, and from which we possess a great advantage over our ancestors, is the facility now afforded for bringing building materials of every description from a distance, from our colonies, and from foreign lands, so that we have the widest choice possible in the selection of marbles and other stones.

The mere application, however, of glass and iron as materials for the construction of large and public edifices, as in the case of the Crystal Palace, and of various railway stations, can hardly be considered to amount to the invention of a new style of architecture, but is simply the adaptation and accommodation of new materials to old purposes and designs. Yet in this mode, it may be said, that nearly every order of architecture primarily originated, and that it was the moulding of particular materials to meet special requirements, that caused the development of the several styles by which architecture is distinguished.

How extensively difficulties and necessities of various kinds operate as a stimulus to inventive effort, is exhibited by the ready and dexterous manner in which our ancestors turned to account stone of the most unpromising sort, as also brick and even flint, in the development of their architectural designs. Indeed, the whole history of architecture is a marvellous record of the mode in which the mind has exerted itself in its dealings with matter, and of the various influences and suggestions which have acted upon it, and conduced to this end.

As regards the attempt to invent or introduce new styles, whether in architecture or in any of the arts, in painting, in sculpture, in poetry, in costume, or in gardening, we must ever bear in mind that there are many persons, and those of great taste and extensive cultivation, who make a point of deciding on the beauty and real merit of every new style, and indeed of every new production, not by its own intrinsic excellence and accordance with taste, but solely by its accordance with what has been produced before, and by its correspondence with already approved models. If it coincides with them, however indifferent it may be in itself, its excellence is undisputed, and is deemed indisputable. If it varies from them, however beautiful or tasteful in its design, it is declared to be intolerable, because at variance with the orthodox standard. Such a mode of deciding upon the merit of an artistical performance, is, of course, fatal to originality; and, if consistently carried out, to all advancement and improvement whatsoever. The

only sound and correct mode of determining the claim of any new effort in all these cases, must necessarily be by ascertaining whether it is in accordance with taste, and with the real principles of art and nature, the sole criterion by which the merit of every work of art, of whatever kind, and whatever period, must be decided.

Nevertheless, in the effort to invent new styles in architecture, or indeed in costume or any other art, the greatest care must be taken that our originality does not lead us into extravagance, and that deformity instead of beauty is not the result. In all these cases, invention requires, not indeed to be checked, but to be controlled and kept in order by the reason. Invention equally with taste and imagination, needs discipline and training and correction, to prevent it from running wild, and from becoming barren and bearing no fruit; and the more vigorous and more extensive is the inventive power, the more essentially does it stand in need of this supervision.

XI. One institution of a peculiar nature appears to be more or less essential in every country where the arts not only attain a high degree of perfection, but, what is equally important, maintain themselves at that point. I allude to the establishment of a national tribunal of true taste, to which all matters affecting taste and criticism in art of each kind may be referred, and whose influence may correct and regulate the taste of the nation.

Such a tribunal should be of a threefold nature. It must be composed, in the first place, of men of the purest taste, and of the highest skill and knowledge in the particular art in question, who are capable of directing and correcting the general taste of the public. The determinations of these persons should, however, be revised by the criticism of those of superior general acquirements and taste, to whom an appeal may lie against the decision of those in the same department with the producer of the particular work of art.

The third constituent of this tribunal will be formed by the public at large, who, as I have already stated, will generally both confirm what is right in the two former, and be equally valuable in correcting what is erroneous.

Probably, indeed, the most perfect tribunal that could be formed as regards works of art, would be one constituted of a mixed body of artists and of men of high intellectual cultivation, including orators and historians as well as poets, and the decision of which should be open for confirmation or reversal by the general voice of the public at large, whose opinion is more serviceable to follow and to uphold the judgment of the other, than to originate one of its own.

It might fairly be urged that the Royal Academy is the fittest body, and, indeed, eminently qualified to constitute the tribunal in question. But it appears in many respects desirable that others besides artists, such as poets critics scholars and men of letters, should be combined in this jurisdiction; in addition to which, it may be observed that the performances of artists, of members of the Royal Academy, frequently require the free and independent criticism and correction of such a tribunal. Even if poets and historians were elected into the Academy, it would hardly of itself be adequate to discharge the important functions required of this body, which should, from time to time, be selected by the responsible government of the country, out of such distinguished persons of different pursuits and tastes as appear peculiarly adapted for this purpose.

One great object of every educational institution for the cultivation of each branch of learning should be,—in addition to its primary end, in the most perfect teaching of that particular acquirement,—instruction along with it, and affording some guarantee that they should not be neglected, in those other collateral pursuits which are essential to the mental training of the individuals who are to follow the avocation in question, such as poetry, history, and the general elements of knowledge. To none more than artists is this collateral teaching essential, alike on account of the absorbing nature of art as a pursuit, and also because many artists of great natural powers, such as Turner, have suffered much from the want of such cultivation. And I cannot help repeating the opinion already expressed, that the contemporaneous study and contemplation of all the arts together, viewing at once the different aims and capabilities and ob-

jects of each, will do much to correct that exclusive, or at any rate undue attention to mechanical effect to which I have alluded; and will accomplish more than anything else, in the full development of the real end and noble object and capability of art in general.

Professorships in each of our principal Universities, with stipends suitable to and corresponding with the importance of their duties, and adequate to ensure the acceptance of the office by really efficient men, should also be established; not, indeed, merely to teach the elements of painting and sculpture, but art generally; to demonstrate its importance both nationally and individually, and practically as well as theoretically; and especially, to point out the connection between painting, poetry, sculpture, architecture, eloquence, music, acting, costume and gardening; to show the intimacy of their relationship, and above all the desirableness, nay necessity, of cultivating them all in common. By this means, not only would an efficient national tribunal of true taste be established, but that tribunal would ultimately be superseded by the general taste of the nation.

In addition to these tribunals, and as necessary appendages to them, there should be examples of perfection in each art as authorities to which to appeal. As taste is regulated by definite and fixed principles, so is it of itself a matter of certain application. Models of admitted excellence, as standards which may on all occasions be confidently referred to, should of course be obtained. A perfect model of true taste must be derived from nature, but should be corrected and rendered complete by the application of art. Many men of great genius, as we see by their efforts in the earlier days of art, have been lost to the world from the want of proper models to direct their studies aright. The real use of a model is not, however, so much to serve for a copy as for a guide; like a beacon, we are not to steer always towards it, but occasionally to be warned by it. By having works of excellence ever before our eyes, we are not only encouraged to vie with them, but inferior performances become distasteful. By this means too, error would be exposed, and wrong principles and false taste guarded against. Some

standard of attainable excellence, if not of absolute perfection in each art, must of course be established, and ever kept in view. The illegitimate sway of fashion would be by this means eternally vanquished, and fashion itself would be rendered an obedient subject to the lawful rule of taste.

As regards painting, sculpture, and architecture, the professors of those arts most fitly constitute the first portion of this tribunal; the writers and critics upon them the second part; and the public, who patronize, or are supposed to patronize them, the remaining portion.

The popularity or established reputation acquired by intellectual efforts, whether works of learning or of art, is in a great measure analogous to that which is obtained by individuals, and is principally of two kinds :—1. That fleeting and general popularity which originates in qualities of an attractive and showy description which all can appreciate. 2. That limited popularity which, when once established, is sure and permanent, resulting from the possession of solid qualities of a nature which few only can appreciate, but which secure the approbation of those of influence, whose *dictum* commands the admiration of the world. Of the former kind is the popularity gained by works of fiction of an exciting tendency, although of but very ordinary merit, and by showy and attractive works of art. Of the latter kind is the popularity which some of our greatest poets and authors and painters have acquired by slow degrees, and only after a severe test of their excellence, through the verdict of those leading minds whose decision ultimately influences, and, indeed, determines the national taste. Of the former kind are the trivial romances and tawdry pictures which half a century ago drew crowds of readers and admirers, but which have been nearly half a century ago forgotten. Of the latter kind, are the works of Milton and Shakspeare, and Raphael and Michael Angelo, which, however, neglected by the multitude on their first appearance, will endure in reputation to the very end of time.

In the cartoons and the Elgin Marbles we have standard works of high perfection to which to appeal. To these I should be glad to see added a national gallery of copies and models, such

as I have suggested, of all the most eminent productions throughout the world in painting sculpture and architecture, which would form the noblest and most perfect model school that the nation could possess.

In poetry eloquence and music, the professors of our Universities, and the highest geniuses in these arts, might constitute the first part of the tribunal; the critics the second part; and the readers and hearers of them, with the public generally, the third portion; while the classic writings of Greece and Rome, and the divine compositions of the older musicians, must ever form the choicest models to which to refer.

In like manner also with respect to dramatic acting costume and gardening, these arts must be regulated by the most eminent professors of and proficients in them on the one hand, corrected by intelligent refined criticism and by public opinion, on the other. For these, perhaps more than any other arts, nature furnishes the most perfect, and the only correct models, in the display of natural action, the clothing she has herself bestowed on different orders of beings, and the variety of scenery she presents.

When all this is accomplished, then, and then only, will a perfect and efficient tribunal of true taste be established for works in each department of art. In this case an appeal from the decision of either of these authorities will correct the determination of the other; and considering their different constitution and intellectual bias, it can hardly be expected that if all agree in lauding a particular work, it will be destitute of high merit; or that if all unite in condemning it, it can possess very high claims to general excellence. The errors of one branch of this tribunal will be the best corrective of those of the other; and by the determination of the whole may the national mind be at length safely and satisfactorily guided and rectified in the due appreciation of works of art of each kind.

The union here advocated of the study of all the arts together, would greatly aid the establishment of a perfect taste in each of them, as not only would each art be understood, but, moreover, each would act as a corrective of the other.

The best, and, indeed, the only effectual protection against the predominance of false taste, and the admiration of glittering tinsel, is the inculcation of sound and correct principles. No one who estimated and admired the cartoons of Raphael, would be in danger of being captivated by certain flimsy modern productions. No one who worshipped Cicero, would be at all likely to be enraptured with the gaudy empty declamation of certain orators of our day; any more than a person who relished the refinements of modern cookery could be expected to fall into the habit of feeding upon carrion.

Of supreme importance, therefore, is it to correct the national taste, by means of which will not only meritorious works meet with public encouragement, but those that are meretricious will be generally discouraged.

Although taste often fluctuates, and what is much admired at one time is comparatively neglected at another, yet its principles are immutable and certain. Particular objects or merits may be in higher estimation at one period than they are at another, and a particular work of art in either department, which was lately much applauded, may have since been eclipsed by a superior performance, or certain productions may be especially suitable to a certain period only; but this does not prove that the fundamental principles of taste, which regulate their decision in each case, are variable or doubtful.

Considerable fluctuations as regards fashion, may, indeed, be allowed in taste, without departing from its principles, especially as regards the proportion of admiration which we bestow on any particular work at one time, to what we bestow on the same work at another. But this is a question not of actual quality, but only of degree. Fashion should never lead us to approve what is wholly contrary to taste, or to despise that which is in accordance with it. On the other hand, there is no doubt that at particular periods, or among particular people, false or corrupt taste has prevailed. Different opinions may also have been held at different times as to the relative merits of Homer and Virgil; but no difference of opinion at these periods prevailed as to whether they had merits or not. The fluctuations of opinion in matters of taste have, however, done

more than anything to create doubts of the genuineness of taste itself. Moreover, men probably vary one from another in matters of taste as much from difference in cultivation, as from difference in intellectual moral or physical constitution.

There is nothing so destructive to the taste of any period or any people, as the thirst for extravagance and gaudy display which will sometimes gain the ascendency, and which by its dazzling and meretricious effect blinds the eyes of its votaries, and prevents them from viewing with pleasure works of real exalted merit.

Ignorance may be dispelled, and error set right; but in this case the very fountains of truth are poisoned. We can only fitly compare this unwholesome longing after extravagance and unnatural stimulants in the national taste, to an habitual craving after intoxicating liquors in the case of an individual, which takes possession of the whole soul, destroys the appetite for all wholesome drink, and eventually and speedily leads to enervation and destruction, each hour the craving for morbid excitement becoming greater, and each gratification of it tending to new excesses. This applies alike to every branch of the arts, and to all of them equally, whether single or combined; and to acting as much as to poetry and painting.

Accordingly, it is this fatal and widely destructive malady which is usually observable in the last age of the existence of any art, and of a nation too, which is the certain forerunner of its final decay, the sure harbinger of its dissolution, that at best but foretells a condition of lengthened collapse, out of which it can only revive after a long and death-like slumber. Nevertheless, in art, as well as in material substances, it may sometimes happen that corruption and decay eventually lead not to dissolution, but to renovation, and to the springing up and development of ideas which are wholly new and original. The perishing of the seed is the cause of the plant vegetating. The decay of Grecian and Roman architecture, led to the revival of the same art in the Gothic garb, which was but a resuscitation of a dying art, fostered and reared by the genial taste and original genius of those by whom its growth was directed.

So also in nature, it not unfrequently happens that the appearance in many objects of an extraordinary degree of richness, is the surest forerunner of their decline. Thus, the sere tints of autumn, the golden glories which so enchant the tasteful admirer of landscape scenery, are but the unerring symptoms of decay; the hoariness of old age, so reverend and majestic in its appearance, serves but to proclaim that the period of dissolution is approaching; and the glorious luminary of the heavens is never so gorgeous or so resplendent as at the hour of its decline.

XII. I come now to the conclusion of this most interesting and ennobling subject, which to me has ever been a source of high gratification, and which to all affords food for research and reflection of a kind the most delightful and the most refining. In this treatise it has been my endeavour to demonstrate the general utility of the arts for the several purposes of life, intellectual social and moral, both as regards their cultivation by individuals, and their effect as a branch of national study.* I have attempted to evince that, although each apparently differing in their nature and purposes, they each had their origin in the mind; and, though so widely branching forth into various channels that occasionally their course can with difficulty be traced to that original, they each at first came from the same fount. They rose like a little rill,† springing out of some dense rock, or oozing from the foot of a glacier.‡ Amidst peaks and over precipices they trace their obscure way,§ now sweetly warbling to the verdant hills, now foaming tempestuously down some dark and deep ravine, exhibiting in their career all the various passions and excitements which distract human nature.‖ As the stream swells into greater importance it acquires new features, and becomes endowed with new characteristics.** At one time it is strongly tinctured by the soil over which it flows; at another, clear as crystal, it exhibits to the eye each pebble glittering beneath its waters. At one time it is gently rustled by the breeze; at another,

* Chapter I. † Chapter II. ‡ Chapter III.
§ Chapter IV. ‖ Chapter XI. ** Chapter V.

it is agitated furiously by tempestuous billows. Now smooth and serene as a mirror, it reflects with the utmost precision each object in view,—the towering rocks that overhang it, the blue mountains in the distance, the variously tinted foliage which bedecks its banks, the clouds of different shapes and aspects that are hovering over it, or, in the still night, the blazing planets which sparkle on its surface. At one time it is dark and overhung with gloom, at another brilliantly glistening in the sun.

We have followed this magnificent stream tracing it from its source, and have watched its wanderings from its first growing into a warbling brook, when from its insignificance it would scarcely seem to merit attention; though silently it flowed on, growing at each turn more majestic, and gradually expanding, until at length on its bosom huge vessels, with outspread sails, were seen to be wafted, and the mightiest objects which can excite the human mind, or represent the dignity of man, are floated in its depths.* We have accompanied it through all the varied and beautiful and noble scenery with which it abounds, where at one turn bold rocks, at another verdant plains, formed the shores along which we passed.† The wild and oftentimes terrific regions of imagination we have also been exploring,‡ and have penetrated those dark and mystic caverns where that enchanting spirit delights to dwell. How diversified, how beautiful, and how wondrous have been the prospects which we have surveyed, and of which our own nation furnishes abundant instances!§ Its mighty and obscure deeps we have been also led to fathom, and to dive down and discover the hidden springs and currents by which its course is impelled or impeded.‖

While engaged in the study of this sublime topic, we have been struck with awe and with delight at the stupendous and beautiful harmony of our own intellectual system, by which, as by the genial influence of the planets in the material world, which roll on through successive ages floating in invisible æther, each guiding, lighting, and affording genial warmth

* Chapter VI. † Chapters VIII, IX, X, XI.
‡ Chapter XII. § Chapter XIII. ‖ Chapters XIII, XIV.

to the other, these different efforts have been so successfully and so completely regulated; and have admired the arrangement, alike astonishing and benign, by which the most enchanting and agreeable of our pursuits, should be also that which is productive of the most rich and ennobling effects, through its secret though not less surprising operations, in the refinement and enlargement of all the powers of the soul.

THE END.

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